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| Logo  Description automatically generated | **North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality** |  |
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| **Priority Rating System Guidance and Form for Division of Water Infrastructure**  **Stormwater Funding Program through the**  **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**  **Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments (LASII) Fund** |
|  | (Last updated: July 2022) |

**Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments Fund**

Per North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(a) Establishment of the Fund. – Funds appropriated in this act from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund to the Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ) for stormwater infrastructure shall be used by the Department to establish the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments (LASII) Fund as a special fund in the Department. The Fund shall be used to provide grants to eligible entities for projects that will improve or create infrastructure for controlling stormwater quantity and quality.

**Eligibility for Funding from the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments Fund**

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| * ***It is recommended that the applicant first determine whether it is eligible to be considered for LASII funds*, as required by Session Law 2021-180, for both stormwater construction grant funds and stormwater planning grant funds. *Complete the LASII Fund Eligibility Form to demonstrate eligibility.*** |

Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(d) defines an eligible entity as: “a city[[1]](#footnote-2) or county that (i) documents in a form and manner as the Department may specify a stormwater quality or quantity issue and (ii) demonstrates that it would experience a significant hardship raising the revenue necessary to finance stormwater management activities within its jurisdiction based on income and unemployment data, population trends, and any other data determined relevant by the Department. A regional council of government created pursuant to Part 2 of Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes or a nonprofit entity is also an eligible entity under this section if the regional council of government or nonprofit entity partners with a city or county.” Required documentation is as follows:

1. **Document a Stormwater Quality or Stormwater Quantity Issue** – Required by Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(d)(i)

Applicants seeking stormwater grant funding from the ARPA funds are required to provide:

1. A narrative that describes the stormwater quality issue and/or stormwater quantity issue, based on historic or projected precipitation, and how the grant will be used to address the issue;
2. A map and/or a narrative that identifies the location of the stormwater quality and/or stormwater quantity issue. The map and/or narrative must show or describe the watershed upstream of the location, and if possible, identify the acreage, percentage of impervious area and land use cover in the watershed upstream of the location; and
3. If available, photographs of the stormwater quality and/or stormwater quantity issue and identification of the amount of rainfall that caused the issue, based on the nearest reliable rain gauge, news articles about the issue, or other information that demonstrates the issue.

**AND**

1. **Demonstrate “Significant Hardship Raising the Revenue …”** – Required by Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(d)(ii)

The criteria that will be applied when making the determination of significant hardship raising the revenue necessary to finance stormwater management activities will vary by the type of stormwater grant application as follows.

1. **For applications for Stormwater Construction Grants and Stormwater Planning Grants** **(except applications to Develop and Implement a New Stormwater Utility)**

An applicant must demonstrate eligibility by meeting either of the two criteria below:

**Criterion 1:** At least one (1) of the five (5) five Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators for the applicant are worse than the state benchmarks shown Table 1 below.

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| **Table 1.** | | |
| **Local Government Unit Indicator** |  | **State Benchmarks for Fall 2022 Applications** |
| Population Change | **< =** | 4.5% |
| Poverty Rate | **> =** | 14.0% |
| Median Household Income | **< =** | $56,642 |
| Unemployment Rate | **> =** | 7.1% |
| Per Capita Appraised Value of Property | **< =** | $125,015 |

**OR**

**Criterion 2:** The City or County as a whole does not meet Criterion 1 but has stormwater projects that benefit disadvantaged areas within the City’s or County’s jurisdiction. To be eligible, 75 percent or more of the construction cost must be used to directly benefit disadvantaged areas.

Disadvantaged areas may be subsections or pockets of a City’s or County’s jurisdiction, rather than the entire City or County. For instance, disadvantaged areas may be census block groups that meet qualifying characteristics. The targeted project area will be determined a “disadvantaged area” based on factors that shall include:

* Median household income, poverty rates, per capita appraised property values of property, and/or employment rates of the targeted project area,
* Additional factors that may qualify the targeted project area as disadvantaged, such as but not limited to demographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic stressors, or cost-of-living stressors may also be considered.

Use of federal or state-generated maps to demonstrate that a targeted project area is disadvantaged is encouraged. For instance, using screenshots or printouts of NC DEQ’s [Community Mapping System](https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/deq-north-carolina-community-mapping-system), labeling and identifying on the map the targeted project area overlapping “Potentially Underserved Block Groups” and/or “Tribal Boundaries” that appear on the online map as shaded areas (these are considered disadvantaged areas).

For Criterion 2, the proposed project is not required to be located *within* a disadvantaged area, but the project *must result in* water quality improvements within the disadvantaged area and/or reduce water quantity impacts within the disadvantaged area. Over 75 percent of the project’s construction costs must be used to provide these benefits to the disadvantaged areas to qualify under Criterion 2.

To document that the direct beneficiaries of the project are disadvantaged, provide a narrative, with or without a map, describing the project location, areas in which project benefits are anticipated, and disadvantaged area(s).

* Example Map Documentation: Screenshots or printouts of NC DEQ’s [Community Mapping System](https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/deq-north-carolina-community-mapping-system), or similar federal or state-generated map, with project location and areas in which project benefits are anticipated overlayed on top of Potentially Underserved Block Groups and/or Tribal Boundaries. Attach screenshots or printouts of maps to this Certification Form.
* Narrative Documentation: Narrative must sufficiently describe disadvantaged factors of the areas where the project benefits will accrue, including median household income, poverty rates, per capita appraised property values of property, and/or employment rates of the targeted project area. Additional factors that may qualify the benefiting areas as disadvantaged, such as but not limited to demographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic stressors, or cost-of-living stressors.

1. **For applications to Develop and Implement a New Stormwater Utility**

If the city or county does not have a stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund and the project description in the application states that the application is to develop and implement a new stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund, the city or county will have met the requirement to demonstrate that there is a significant hardship in raising the revenue necessary to finance stormwater management activities within its jurisdiction. The grant amount for which a city or county will be eligible will be capped at different levels based on the number of LGU Indicators (from Criterion 1) that are worse than the state benchmarks.

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| * ***It is recommended that only if the applicant is able to demonstrate that it is eligible to be considered for LASII funds, per the completed LASII Fund Eligibility Certification Form, should the applicant proceed with using this Guidance Document to complete an application for stormwater funding through the LASII Fund.*** |

**Grant Limits**

Per Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(c), of the approximately $82 million in undirected funds, seventy percent of the funds are allocated for construction grants (a total of approximately $57.4 million) and thirty percent of the funds are allocated for planning grants (approximately $24.6 million). There are no match requirements for grants from the LASII Fund.

Any ARPA funds directly allocated to recipients in the Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2021 for directed projects under Section 12.14.(b) will count towards an entity’s initial award and additional incremental awards.

Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(f) defines the statutory maximum limits that apply to grants from this Fund as: “(1) Construction grants may not exceed fifteen million dollars ($15,000,000), and (2) Planning grants may not exceed five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000)”. The stormwater grants are limited to the following amounts:

1. **Stormwater Construction Grants**

Stormwater construction grants, except for the development and implementation of a new stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund, will be limited to $5 million per applicant per grant cycle. If two or more units of local government work together to improve stormwater quality and/or quantity control under one project, the total amount of the stormwater construction grant will be limited to $7.5 million per grant cycle.

1. **Stormwater Planning Grants**

Stormwater planning grants will be limited to $400,000 per applicant per grant cycle. If the study is a collaborative effort with other local government units, the total amount of the stormwater planning grant will be limited to $500,000 per grant cycle.

1. **Development and Implementation of New Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund Grants**

The grant amount for an eligible entity to develop and implement a new stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund will be limited to different amounts based on the number of Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators that are worse than the state benchmarks shown in Table 1 above, as follows:

* If an entity demonstrates that 0, 1, or 2 of its five LGU Indicators are worse than the state benchmark, the amount of grant funds that may be awarded for the development and implementation of a new stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund is limited to $400,000.
* If an entity demonstrates that 3, 4 or 5 of its five LGU Indicators are worse than the state benchmark, the amount of grant funds that may be awarded for the development and implementation of a new stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund is limited to $500,000.

**Guidance Document**

This Guidance Document aids the applicant in understanding and implementing the Priority Rating Systems for LASII stormwater grant funds. There are two separate Priority Rating Systems in this Guidance Document: one for Stormwater Construction Projects, and one for Stormwater Planning Studies which includes the development and implementation of a new stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund.

For wastewater, drinking water, or CDBG-I funding, or if the applicant is not eligible to be considered for LASII stormwater funds, please use the separate Guidance Documents appropriate for those programs. For wastewater or drinking water Asset Inventory and Assessment grants and wastewater or drinking water Merger/ Regionalization Feasibility grants, please use the separate Guidance Document appropriate for those programs.

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**A. Stormwater Project Narrative – Required for ALL Applications**

1. **Every application for LASII stormwater grant funding must contain a Stormwater Project Narrative in addition to a Project Description. Every narrative must address ALL items listed below.** If an item is not applicable, include the item and place “Not Applicable” after it. The narrative must also address additional items that are listed as required for each applicable Priority Rating System Line Item.
2. Describe the source of the water that is causing the stormwater quality and/or quantity issue. For example, (1) is the issue caused by water that flows into the project area from upstream, overflows the banks of a stream, and then spreads out into the project area; or (2) is the issue caused by rain that falls directly on the project area?
3. If the issue is caused by water flowing from upstream that overflows the banks of a stream, estimate the length of the stream bank that is impacted by the overflow and the acreage that is flooded by the overflow. If the issue is caused by rain falling directly on the project area, estimate the area that is problematic (e.g., an area 5 blocks wide by 3 blocks long).
4. Provide maps at a readable scale that clearly depict the following:
5. Location of the proposed stormwater project,
6. Drainage area of the proposed stormwater project,
7. Inlet and outlet locations of the proposed stormwater infrastructure, and
8. Sufficient labels of geographical refences and landmarks such as roads, streams, river, political boundaries, etc. to identify the location of the project.
9. Do you have an established stormwater utility as of the date of this application? If so, when was the utility created and when were the first stormwater fees collected? Do you have an established Stormwater Enterprise Fund as of the date of this application? If so, provide the following information:
10. When the Fund was created and when the first stormwater fees were collected
11. Number of single-family residential stormwater accounts
12. Number of non-single-family residential stormwater accounts
13. Number of commercial, industrial, and institutional stormwater accounts
14. Single-family residential stormwater rate or fee per month
15. Non-single-family residential stormwater rate or fee per month
16. Commercial, industrial, and institutional stormwater rate or fee per month
17. Estimate the amount of revenue collected in the past 12 months that is used to pay for stormwater work and state the source of the revenue.
18. Estimate the amount of funds expended in the past 12 months to pay for stormwater work and state the source of the funds; for example, from the General Fund, from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund, etc.
19. Do you have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit? If so, provide the permit number, the date the permit was issued, and a summary of any compliance issues.
20. If the purpose of the project is to construct or plan for new stormwater conveyance infrastructure and if the new stormwater conveyance infrastructure will receive additional runoff from future upstream growth and development or increased storm intensity, document how the volume of stormwater runoff from the future growth and development or increased storm intensity will be managed so that the additional runoff will not cause new or increased flooding or exacerbate flood risks downstream of the new stormwater conveyance infrastructure, and how the additional runoff will not cause new or worsen or exacerbate water quality issues downstream of the new stormwater conveyance infrastructure.
21. If seeking funding for a stormwater planning study, the stormwater project narrative must include a detailed description of the proposed stormwater planning activity and the goals of the proposed planning activity.
22. Describe any public input sessions or notifications about the project that have been specifically focused on residents and/or businesses that may be most directly impacted by the project.

**B. ACTIVITIES THAT ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR STORMWATER CONSTRUCTION OR STORMWATER PLANNING GRANTS**

The following activities are **not eligible** uses of LASII funds:

1. Land conservation including the purchase of land in fee simple or the purchase of easements for the purpose of permanently conserving the property, including farmland. Two state funding programs that provide funds for this type of work are the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Land and Water Fund, and the NC Department of Agriculture Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.
2. Low impact development
3. Creation or construction of greenways, parks, and open space
4. Repairing or improving transportation infrastructure as the primary project purpose or benefit
5. Constructing or repairing dams or other structures designed to retain waters within a stream channel
6. Constructing or repairing levees, flood walls, or sea walls
7. Removal of dams or levees
8. Removing stream debris other than that which is incidental to the project
9. Dredging
10. Activities that satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements under NCGS 143-214.11
11. The purchase or rental of vehicles such as cars, trucks, or vans
12. The purchase or rental of computers, laptops, tablets, and cell phones
13. Elevation of structures
14. Removal of structures inside or outside of the floodplain
15. Costs of stormwater infrastructure to serve or promote future growth and development
16. Costs to comply with existing stormwater ordinances or other ordinances of the jurisdiction
17. Costs to comply with NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements
18. Preparation of a stormwater asset inventory without a stormwater asset assessment (if seeking funding to prepare a stormwater asset inventory, the scope of work must also include a condition assessment of the stormwater assets)
19. Staff salaries, overhead or expenses
20. Costs for operation and/or maintenance of stormwater infrastructure
21. Costs for water quality monitoring

**C. Narrative and Documentation Required to Support Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System Points**

**Stormwater Construction Project Application Submittal Requirements**

**A Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System narrative along with supporting documentation as required by this Guidance Document must be submitted with the funding application.**

1. A narrative that supports the points claimed in the Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System is a required part of the application. The four categories below correspond to the categories in the Priority Rating System score sheet. **Address every applicable line item.** If a line item is not applicable, include the line item and place “Not Applicable” next to it.

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| Category 1 | Project Purpose |
| Category 2 | Project Benefits |
| Category 3 | System Management |
| Category 4 | Affordability |

* The narrative must be consistent with information provided in the Division of Water Infrastructure Application for Funding (DWI Application) and other supporting information.
* The narrative must be complete to provide for accurate scoring and concise enough that critical information is not lost in unnecessary text. Text should only provide information that supports the award of points in the Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System (i.e., do not describe other benefits that are not included in the Priority Rating System).
* If there are no applicable points in any given category, state that there are no applicable points under that category.

1. Maps are preferred and for some line items are required as noted in the line items below. Maps should include sufficient labels of geographical references and be at a readable scale. Individual line items may require specific maps as listed below.
2. A completed Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System score sheet form must be submitted with the funding application. To claim points for a particular line item, mark “X” on the score sheet. For each category, provide the subtotal of points claimed on the score sheet.
3. Request all the priority points for which the application demonstrates eligibility; the Division does not award unrequested priority points.
4. Submit all supporting documentation to determine priority points with the funding application. The Division will not request additional information or documentation. The Division will determine priority points based solely on the information submitted.
5. The Division reviews each application (even multiple applications from the same applicant) as a stand-alone application. The Division will not search other applications from the same applicant for missing information. Provide all relevant information in each application, even if it is submitted in a different application.
6. Be sure each copy of the application includes all required or relevant information and signatures.

**Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System Narrative Guidance**

**Category 1 – Project Purpose**

The project narrative must fully describe the proposed project and how each element supports the Project Purpose claimed on the Stormwater Construction Project Priority Rating System score sheet form.

All parts of the project must meet the claimed Project Purpose. If any part of the project does not meet a higher-scoring Project Purpose, the application earns only the points for a lower-scoring Project Purpose that all elements of the project meet. The claimed Project Purpose must be consistent with all information provided in the application.

An application can earn points in Category 1 for only one Project Purpose (Line Item 1.A, 1.B, or 1.C). If a project will serve several purposes and if unsure how to classify the application, please contact the Division staff.

Although an application can earn points for only one Project Purpose, additional points for sub-categories (Line Item 1.B.1 and Line Item 1.B.2) may also be earned. An application cannot earn points for any other combination of Project Purposes.

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| **Note:** For Category 1 – Project Purpose, the maximum number of points that a project can earn is capped at 35 points. Projects that do not receive Project Purpose points may still be eligible for funding. |

**Line Item 1.A** – More than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create new stormwater control measures (SCMs) or to improve, retrofit, repair, rehabilitate or replace existing SCM infrastructure to control stormwater quality

15A NCAC 02H .1002 (49) defines a stormwater control measure as a permanent structural device that is designed, constructed, and maintained to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff by promoting settling or filtration; or to mimic the natural hydrologic cycle by promoting infiltration, evapotranspiration, post-filtration discharge, reuse of stormwater, or a combination thereof.

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| **Note:** To qualify for points in Line Item 1.A, the SCM must adhere to the NC Stormwater Design Manual (<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/energy-mineral-and-land-resources/stormwater/stormwater-program/stormwater-design>) Part C: Minimum Design Criteria and Recommendations for Stormwater Control Measures. SCMs include stormwater wetlands per the NC Stormwater Design Manual. |

An application can earn points in Line Item 1.A only if more than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create new stormwater control measures (SCMs) or to improve, retrofit, repair, rehabilitate or replace existing SCM infrastructure to control stormwater quality, for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 1.A.1 or 1.A.2).

* ***Line Item 1.A.1*** – Proposed SCMs are Nature-Based Stormwater Solutions

*35 points*

Nature-based stormwater SCMs earn the maximum points under Category 1 – Project Purpose. The narrative must clearly demonstrate how the SCM meets the definition of a nature-based stormwater solution. The proposed SCMs must comply with NCGA Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(h) which defines nature-based solutions as sustainable planning, design, environmental management, and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to store, infiltrate, and treat water by enlisting natural features and processes in efforts to promote resilience, reduce flood risks, improve water quality, protect coastal property, restore and protect wetlands, stabilize shorelines, and add recreational space. The narrative must include:

* A statement that the project will adhere to the NC Stormwater Design Manual Part C: Minimum Design Criteria and Recommendations for Stormwater Control Measures,
* A clear description of how the SCM meets the definition of a nature-based stormwater solution and how the SCM will store, infiltrate, and treat stormwater by enlisting natural features and processes,
* A list of the potential types of SCMs to be used and the key design considerations that support the feasibility of implementing each type of proposed SCM at the location for which it is proposed,
* A map that shows the location of the proposed SCMs,
* If the proposed SCMs will receive runoff from future upstream growth and development, in addition to existing development, state the percentage of impervious area that will be tributary to the SCM for both future development (estimated) and existing development, and
* If the proposed SCMs will receive runoff from future upstream growth and development or increased storm intensity, document how the additional volume of stormwater runoff from the future growth and development or increased storm intensity will be managed so that the additional runoff will not cause new or increased flooding or exacerbate flood risks downstream of the proposed SCMs, and how the additional runoff will not cause new or worsen or exacerbate water quality issues downstream of the proposed SCMs.
* ***OR Line Item 1.A.2*** – Proposed SCMs are Not Nature-Based Stormwater Solutions

*25 points*

If the proposed SCM is not a nature-based stormwater solution, the application will earn points under Line Item 1.A.2. The narrative must include:

* A statement that the project will adhere to the NC Stormwater Design Manual Part C: Minimum Design Criteria and Recommendations for Stormwater Control Measures,
* A list of the potential types of SCMs to be used and the key design considerations that support the feasibility of implementing each type of proposed SCM at the location for which it is proposed,
* A map that shows the location of the proposed SCMs,
* If the proposed SCMs will receive runoff from future upstream growth and development, in addition to existing development, state the percentage of impervious area that will be tributary to the SCM for both future development (estimated) and existing development, and
* If the proposed SCMs will receive runoff from future upstream growth and development or increased storm intensity, document how the additional volume of stormwater runoff from the future growth and development or increased storm intensity will be managed so that the additional runoff will not cause new or increased flooding or exacerbate flood risks downstream of the proposed SCMs, and how the additional runoff will not cause new or worsen or exacerbate water quality issues downstream of the proposed SCMs.

**Line Item 1.B** – Restoration of streams, wetlands, buffers, or estuaries to control stormwater quality

*25 points*

An application can earn points in Line Item 1.B and additional points in the sub-categories in Line Item 1.B.1 and 1.B.2. A project that will restore a stream, wetland, buffer, or estuary from its existing substandard state to a more natural state to control stormwater quality, including vegetated buffers or soft bioengineered stream banks, qualifies for points under this line item. Stream daylighting that removes natural streams from artificial pipes and restores a more natural stream morphology is included. Activities that satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements under NCGS 143-214.11 are not eligible for funding. The narrative must include:

* A statement that the proposed project is not an activity to satisfy any compensatory mitigation requirements and that the applicant will not at any time seek compensatory mitigation credits for the work accomplished under the proposed project,
* A map that shows the location of the proposed streams, wetlands, buffers, or estuaries that will be restored, and
* Photographs that show the current condition of the proposed project location. Photos must be taken no longer than 3 months before the date of the application with a date stamp on the photograph. All photographs must be date stamped.

Projects may also qualify for Line Items 1.B.1 and 1.B.2 for additional points.

* ***Line Item 1.B.1*** – Project includes restoration of a first order stream and includes stormwater infiltration SCMs

*Additional 2 points*

If the stream/wetland/buffer/estuary restoration project occurs along a first-order stream and includes stormwater infiltration SCMs, the project qualifies for two additional points. The narrative must include:

* Key design considerations that support the feasibility of implementing each type of proposed stormwater infiltration SCM at the location for which it is proposed, and
* A map that shows the location and name of the first-order stream (if named), the streams/wetlands/ buffers/estuaries that will be restored, and the locations of the stormwater infiltration SCMs.
* ***Line Item 1.B.2*** – Project includes restoration of permanent riparian buffers to at least 30 feet on both sides of the stream

*Additional 2 points*

If the stream/wetland/buffer/estuary restoration project will restore the riparian buffer to at least 30 feet on both sides of the stream from its existing substandard state to a more natural state, and the applicant states in the narrative that the restoration of the buffer includes all the actions listed below, the project qualifies for two additional points:

* Restoration of existing vegetation in a buffer meeting the following criteria:

1. Woody vegetation for Zone 1 (30 feet) of the buffer, and
2. Woody or herbaceous vegetation for Zone 2 (Zone 1 plus 20 feet) of the buffer.

* A minimum of 30 feet on each side of the stream must be protected. Note that the maximum buffer width that is eligible for funding is 50 feet on each side of the stream.
* The removal of all stormwater discharges through the buffer that are not associated with natural drainageways, if applicable.

**Line Item 1.C** – More than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create or improve, retrofit, repair, rehabilitate or replace existing stormwater infrastructure to control stormwater quantity

*25 points*

An application can earn points in Line Item 1.C only if more than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create or improve, retrofit, repair, rehabilitate or replace existing stormwater infrastructure to control stormwater quantity.

The repair or replacement of culverts or other road-stream crossing infrastructure is eligible to the extent that the purpose of the project is to control stormwater quantity. The repair or replacement of culverts may necessitate the repair or upgrade of roads. Funds may be used only for road repairs and upgrades that interact directly with an eligible stormwater infrastructure project[[2]](#footnote-3). Repairing or improving transportation infrastructure is not eligible as a primary project purpose.

The narrative must include:

* Describe the peak flow reduction that is expected, which is the difference between the current peak flow from the drainage area and the planned peak flow from the drainage area that will occur after the project is constructed,
* A statement that the primary purpose of the proposed project is not to repair or improve transportation infrastructure,
* A map that shows the location of the proposed stormwater infrastructure,
* If the proposed stormwater infrastructure will receive runoff from future upstream growth and development, in addition to existing development, state the percentage of impervious area that will be tributary to the stormwater infrastructure for both future development (estimated) and existing development, and
* If the proposed stormwater infrastructure will receive runoff from future upstream growth and development or increased storm intensity, document how the additional volume of stormwater runoff from the future growth and development or increased storm intensity will be managed so that the additional runoff will not cause new or increased flooding or exacerbate flood risks downstream of the proposed stormwater infrastructure, and how the additional runoff will not cause new or worsen or exacerbate water quality issues downstream of the proposed stormwater infrastructure.

**Category 2 – Project Benefits**

Applications earn Project Benefits points only when the applicant identifies a direct connection between the project and the expected benefit.

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| **Note:** For Category 2 – Project Benefits, the maximum number of points that a project can earn is capped at 30 points, even if the narrative documents Project Benefit Line Items that sum to more than 30 points. |

**Line Item 2.A** – Water quality improvement

An application can earn points in Line Item 2.A for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 2.A.1, 2.A.2, 2.A.3, 2.A.4, or 2.A.5):

* ***Line Item 2.A.1*** – Project directly benefits subwatersheds that are impaired as noted on the most recent final version of the Integrated Report

*15 points*

A project qualifies for points under this line item only when the applicant identifies a direct connection between what the proposed project will accomplish and the improvement of water quality in an impaired subwatershed. The impaired subwatershed must be included in the most recent final version of the Integrated Report that is published on the NC DEQ Division of Water Resources website. The narrative must include:

* River basin name, stream name, the 8-digit HUC for the subbasin, and the Assessment Unit,
* A description that identifies the impairment, a reference for the impairment, and how the proposed project will directly improve water quality by addressing the cause(s) of the impairment, and
* A map that places an “X” on the specific project location and stream location with impaired segment highlighted, as well as sufficient labeled landmarks such as roads, streams, political boundaries, etc. to identify the location of the project.

Additional resources are available as follows:

* ***Resource #1:*** The Integrated Report may be found at this website: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/modeling-assessment/water-quality-data-assessment/integrated-report-files>
* ***Resource #2:*** Basinwide Assessment Reports may also be helpful in describing the impairment issues and how the project will directly address the impairment; these reports may be found at <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/basin-planning>. If used, please cite the report name, date, and page number.
* ***Resource #3:*** GIS layers are available at <http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/>. In addition, the DWR’s Planning Section has GIS layers for impaired streams at <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/basin-planning/maps>. This stream layer includes the stream name and impairment category (whether impaired or not). See Figure 1 below.

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

Impairment category (Cat. 4 in this example)

Impaired Stream (highlighted)

Project area

**Figure 1 – Example of GIS layer for stream impairment**

* ***OR Line Item 2.A.2*** – Project directly benefits specific classified waters

*10 points*

A project qualifies for points under this line item only when the applicant identifies a **direct connection** between what the proposed project will accomplish and the improvement of water quality in specific classified waters in the state which are identified as HQW, ORW, Tr, SA, UWL, PNA, AFSA, SAV, WS-I, WS-II, WS-III\*, and WS-IV\* (\* see note below). The narrative must include:

* River basin name, stream name, index number, and stream classification,
* Watershed classification which must be consistent with the subwatershed or Basinwide Water Quality Plan,
* A description that identifies a direct connection between the proposed project and how it will improve water quality in waters with these classifications, and
* A map that identifies the location of the project and location of the specific classified water.

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| **Note:** \* To claim points related to the classifications of WS-III or WS-IV, the project area must be covered by an approved Source Water Protection Plan. The narrative must include a letter from the NC DEQ Division of Water Resources Public Water Supply Section confirming that the project area is covered by an approved Source Water Protection Plan. |

An additional resource is available as follows:

* ***Resource:***  To determine the watershed classification, the DWR Planning Section provides classification lists and GIS layers to locate and document the location of the specific classified waters and their respective classifications at <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/basin-planning/maps>.
* ***OR Line Item 2.A.3*** – Achieves at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) in Nutrient Sensitive Waters

*10 points*

A project qualifies for points under this line item only if applicant demonstrates that the project will improve water quality in nutrient sensitive waters. The proposed SCMs must achieve at least 35% total nitrogen reduction and at least 35% total phosphorus reduction based on the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document requirements for regulatory credits, available here:

<https://deq.nc.gov/media/11819/download>

The narrative must include:

* River basin name, stream name, index number, and stream classification,
* Watershed classification which must be consistent with the watershed or Basinwide Water Quality Plan,
* A statement that the project will adhere to the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document requirements for regulatory credits,
* A statement of the percentage reductions that will be achieved,
* If implementing an item that the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document lists for “possible” credits, include a letter from the NCDEQ Stormwater Program that indicates the criteria needed to make the credits “actual”, and
* If, due to existing site limitations only, SCMs are unable to meet the design requirements listed in the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document, include a letter from the NCDEQ Stormwater Program that indicates a reasonable expected percentage pollutant reduction.
* ***OR Line Item 2.A.4*** – Achieves at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) in Non-Nutrient Sensitive Waters

*5 points*

A project qualifies for points under this line item if the project will improve water quality in non-nutrient sensitive waters. The proposed SCMs must achieve at least 35% total nitrogen reduction and at least 35% total phosphorus reduction based on the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document requirements for regulatory credits. The narrative must include:

* River basin name, stream name, index number, and stream classification,
* Watershed classification which must be consistent with the watershed or Basinwide Water Quality Plan,
* A statement that the project will adhere to the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document requirements for regulatory credits,
* A statement of the percentage reductions that will be achieved,
* If implementing an item that the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document lists for “possible” credits, include a letter from the NCDEQ Stormwater Program that indicates the criteria needed to make the credits “actual”, and
* If, due to existing site limitations only, SCMs are unable to meet the design requirements listed in the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document, include a letter from the NCDEQ Stormwater Program that indicates a reasonable expected percentage pollutant reduction.
* ***OR Line Item 2.A.5*** – Directly benefits a NC Natural Heritage Program natural area

*3 points*

North Carolina’s Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) works to identify the state’s most unique, irreplaceable natural areas. A project qualifies for points under this line item only when the applicant identifies a direct connection between what the proposed project will accomplish and the improvement of water quality in a NC State Natural Heritage Program Natural Area that is rated as “General” or above as shown on the NC Natural Heritage Program natural areas map. The narrative must include:

* Screenshots/printouts of the NCNHP natural area as displayed on the map found at this location: <https://ncnhde.natureserve.org/content/map>,
* On the screenshot/printout, identify the project location with labeled landmarks such as roads, streams, political boundaries, etc. to identify the location of the project, and
* A description that identifies a direct connection between the proposed project and how it will improve water quality in a NCNHP Natural Area that is rated as “General” or above as shown on the screenshots/printout.

**Line Item 2.B** – Flood reduction

An application can earn points in Line Item 2.B for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 2.B.1, 2.B.2, or 2.B.3).

The repair or replacement of culverts or other road-stream crossing infrastructure is eligible to the extent that the purpose of the project is to control stormwater quantity. The repair or replacement of culverts may necessitate the repair or upgrade of roads. Funds may be used only for road repairs and upgrades that interact directly with an eligible stormwater infrastructure project[[3]](#footnote-4). Repairing or improving transportation infrastructure is not allowed as a primary project benefit.

* ***Line Item 2.B.1*** – Increases public safety by improving the applicant’s ability to access and operate critical infrastructure during flood events such as water and/or wastewater treatment infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and/or emergency response facilities, including NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Evacuation Routes

*15 points*

The application can earn points in this sub-category if it will specifically help the applicant access and operate critical infrastructure during flood events. Examples of critical infrastructure include drinking water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, schools, hospitals, and emergency response facilities such as fire stations, that, if not able to be accessed, would present a threat to public safety. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of critical infrastructure. In addition, the application can earn points in this sub-category if it is an evacuation route as designated by the NCDOT. The narrative must include:

* Description of the infrastructure and why the applicant considers it to qualify as critical infrastructure,
* Description of how the proposed project will directly improve the applicant’s ability to access and operate the critical infrastructure during flood events, and
* A map that shows the location of the critical infrastructure or NC DOT Evacuation Route as identified on the NC DOT website at this location: [NCDOT: Evacuation Routes](https://www.ncdot.gov/travel-maps/maps/Pages/evacuation-routes.aspx).
* ***OR Line Item 2.B.2*** – Reduces structural flooding in habitable structures or improves ability to access habitable structures during a flood event

*8 points*

Habitable structures are those that are in good repair and are fit to be occupied by humans. To earn points int this sub-category, the applicant must provide evidence that structural flooding occurs in a crawl space, finished basement, or finished first floor. Yard flooding does not quality for points under this line item. The narrative must include:

* A map that shows the location of each qualifying habitable structure,
* A statement of the nature of the flooding in each habitable structure as crawl space, finished basement or finished first floor,
* A statement about the cause of flooding in each habitable structure. For example, is flooding caused by bank overflow from a stream or river or is it caused by a localized rainfall event. If the habitable structure is flooded due to a lack of stormwater infrastructure or if the infrastructure is in place but is not functioning, explain why it is not functioning,
* A statement of the total number of habitable structures in which structural flooding will be reduced by this project, and
* Description of how the proposed project will reduce structural flooding in each of the habitable structures.
* ***OR Line Item 2.B.3*** – Reduces street flooding

*5 points*

To earn points in this sub-category, the applicant must provide evidence that street flooding occurs. The narrative must include:

* A map that shows the location and extent of the street flooding that will be addressed by this project,
* Identification of the street(s) to be addressed by this project as neighborhood road, truck route, parkway, highway, etc.,
* A statement about the cause of the street flooding. For example, is flooding caused by bank overflow from a stream or river or is it caused by a localized rainfall event. If the street is flooded due to a lack of stormwater infrastructure or if the infrastructure is in place but is not functioning, explain why it is not functioning,
* A statement as to whether the street flooding prevents residents from accessing their homes during a flood event, and
* Description of how the proposed project will reduce the street flooding.

**Line Item 2.C** – By working together, two or more units of local government improve stormwater quality and/or quantity control through collaborative efforts that are necessary in order to accomplish the project

*10 points*

Recognizing that stormwater issues often cross jurisdictional boundaries, two or more units of local government may agree to collaborate on a proposed project. To qualify for points under this line item, the narrative must describe how the collaboration is necessary to accomplish the project. The narrative must include:

* A resolution or board meeting minutes from each of the units of local government that will participate in the collaborative effort, which shows a motion to approve participation in the collaborative stormwater construction project,
* A map that shows the project location and the line of demarcation between the jurisdictions participating in the proposed project,
* Description of the goals and outcomes of the proposed collaborative stormwater project, and the expected benefit to one or more of the jurisdictions participating in the proposed project,
* Description of why it is necessary for each unit of local government to participate in the proposed project in order to meet the goals and achieve the outcomes of the proposed project,
* Discussion of previous collaboration between or among the units of local government that will participate in the proposed project, the reasons for the previous collaboration(s), and the achievements and benefits of the collaboration(s) for all the entities that were involved,
* Description of the status of any previous stormwater quality or quantity work directly related to the proposed project by any of the units of local government that will participate in the proposed project.

**Line Item 2.D** – Project has been identified through a local or regional resilience planning process that included a vulnerability assessment for future conditions and long-term strategies for addressing flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes

*3 points*

To qualify for points under this line item, the proposed project must have been identified through a local or regional resilience planning process that included a vulnerability assessment for future conditions and long-term strategies for addressing flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes. **To qualify, the local or regional plan must address a timeframe of at least ten (10) years.** The narrative must include:

* Name of the local or regional resilience plan, the organization that produced the plan, and date that the plan was finalized,
* List of organizations and/or citizens that participated in the plan development,
* List of organizations and/or citizens that approved the final plan,
* Timeframe addressed by the plan, which must extend at least ten (10) years from the date that the plan was finalized,
* Link to the plan on that organization’s website, or provide the full plan on a flash drive,
* Printout of the pages of the local or regional resilience plan with the portions highlighted that specifically identify and describe the proposed project,
* Concise summary of the future conditions that were utilized to complete the vulnerability assessment with reference to the page(s) of the plan where described, and
* Concise summary of the long-term strategies for addressing flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes, with reference to the page(s) of the plan where described.

**Line Item 2.E** – Includes an innovative stormwater project to address stormwater quantity, or as described in the “Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs” section of the current NC Land and Water Fund Innovative Stormwater Program Manual to address stormwater quality

*5 points*

The North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) is a program of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Division of Land and Water Stewardship. The NCLWF has funded innovative stormwater projects since 2008, has an Innovative Stormwater Program, and an Innovative Stormwater Program Manual.

To qualify for points in Line Item 2.E for projects to address stormwater quality, the project must be either a documented innovative stormwater project as described in the *“Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs – What Types of Projects are Appropriate”* section of the current NCLWF Innovative Stormwater Program Manual (<https://nclwf.nc.gov/media/92/open>), or as listed in the NC DEQ Stormwater Design Manual section entitled *“Areas of Research Needed”* available here: [Stormwater Design Manual | NC DEQ](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/energy-mineral-and-land-resources/stormwater/stormwater-program/stormwater-design).

* For an innovative project to address stormwater quantity, the narrative must include:
* Description of the proposed project and reason that it should be considered an innovative stormwater quantity project,
* Description of how the proposed project will support the utilization of new or different practices in stormwater quantity management,
* Description of how the proposed project will build on current stormwater experience and practices,
* Description of how the proposed project will advance practices in stormwater quantity management regionally or statewide, and
* Description of how the applicant will disseminate findings and results.
* For an innovative project to address stormwater quality, the narrative must include:
* Documentation that establishes the proposed project as a project described in the *“Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs – What Types of Projects are Appropriate”* section of the current NCLWF Innovative Stormwater Program Manual and/or documentation that establishes the proposed project as a project described in the NC DEQ Stormwater Design Manual section entitled *“Areas of Research Needed”*
* Description of how the proposed project will support the utilization of new or different practices in stormwater quality management,
* Description of how the proposed project will build on current stormwater quality management experience and practices,
* Description of how the proposed project will advance practices in stormwater quality management regionally or statewide, and
* Description of how the applicant will disseminate findings and results.

**Line Item 2.F** – Includes a public education component such as signage describing the function of the stormwater quality or quantity infrastructure

*1 point*

To quality for points under this line item, the narrative must include a commitment to provide a public education feature such as signage that describes the function of the proposed project, to be located at the site of the project. The signage must acknowledge the source of the project funds as ARPA LASII funds and must include information to help educate the public about the stormwater quality and/or stormwater quantity issue that the proposed project will resolve.

**Category 3 – System Management**

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| **Note:** For Category 3 – System Management, the maximum number of points that a project can earn is capped at 10 points, even if the narrative documents System Management Line Items that sum to more than 10 points. |

**Line Item 3.A** – Local planning

An application can earn points in Line Item 3.A for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 3.A.1 or 3.A.2):

* ***Line Item 3.A.1*** – Applicant has developed or is developing a local flood resiliency plan, watershed plan, stormwater management plan, stream restoration plan, or estuary restoration plan, and the proposed project is included in the plan, as of the date of application

*5 points*

* For an applicant with an adopted plan, the narrative must include:
* A resolution or board meeting minutes which shows a motion to approve and adopt a local flood resiliency plan, watershed plan, stormwater management plan, stream restoration plan, or estuary restoration plan,
* A statement that the adopted plan includes the proposed project and provides the page number of the plan on which the proposed project is specifically identified and described,
* Description of how the adopted plan demonstrates and supports the need for the proposed project, and
* A link to the adopted plan on the applicant’s website or provide this information on a flash drive.
* For an applicant that is developing one or more of these plans, the narrative must include:
* A statement that the applicant will develop a local flood resiliency plan, watershed plan, stormwater management plan, stream restoration plan, or estuary restoration plan (Plan) and that the proposed project will be included in the Plan, and
* Description of the status of the development of the Plan and the anticipated timeline for Plan completion.

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| **Notes:**   1. Submittal of the plan is intended only for the purpose of determining if the applicant qualifies for points under Line Item 3.A.1, and in no way absolves the applicant of responsibility for regulatory compliance. 2. The stormwater management plan listed for Line Item 3.A.1 is not required to meet the requirements of a NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Stormwater Management Plan. 3. At project completion, the applicant is encouraged to implement the Plan. |

* ***OR Line Item 3.A.2*** – Applicant has implemented an Operation and Maintenance Plan for stormwater infrastructure which includes inspections, repairs, and maintenance as of the date of application

*3 points*

To earn points under this line item, the applicant must have an Operation and Maintenance Plan for stormwater infrastructure that is implemented and is in active use as of the date of the application. The Operation and Maintenance Plan must address the following five areas at a minimum:

1. Inspection requirements for stormwater infrastructure system components,
2. Frequency of inspections including requirements for additional inspections following major storm events,
3. Timeline for scheduling and completing repairs that are needed to return stormwater infrastructure to its full function,
4. A log of completed repairs,
5. Description of basic maintenance requirements and activities such as inlet/outlet cleaning, sediment and debris removal, weeding, mulching, trimming of shrubs and trees, and
6. Schedules for routine and emergency maintenance.

The narrative must include:

* The date that the plan was implemented and a statement that it is in active use as of the date of the application,
* A statement that the plan addresses the five areas as listed above,
* Identification of the parties directly responsible for stormwater system maintenance, including job titles for staff members and/or consultants or contractors,
* An estimate of annual expenditures for stormwater infrastructure operation and maintenance, and
* A link to the plan on the applicant’s website or provide the plan on a flash drive.

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| **Note:** Submittal of the plan is intended only for the purpose of determining if the applicant qualifies for points under Line Item 3.A.2, and in no way absolves the applicant of responsibility for regulatory compliance. |

**Line Item 3.B** – Applicant has a current Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that spans at least five (5) years and proposed project is included in the Stormwater CIP

*2 points*

An application may earn points in Line Item 3.B if the applicant has a Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) adopted by the applicant within two (2) years of the application date, spanning at least five (5) years from the date of adoption, including cost estimates for projects scheduled in the first three (3) years, and that clearly identifies the project proposed for funding within the adopted plan. The narrative must include:

* A resolution or board meeting minutes which shows a motion to approve and adopt the Stormwater CIP within two (2) years of the application date, as follows:
  + A certified true and correct copy of draft meeting minutes is acceptable for meetings held within 45 days of the application deadline,
  + A certification or statement that a CIP was adopted is not sufficient documentation,
  + If a Stormwater CIP has been amended, the resolution or meeting minutes provided must show that the entire Stormwater CIP, as revised, has been adopted.
* A statement of the years covered by the Stormwater CIP, which must extend at least five (5) years from the most recent adoption date,
* A description sufficient to show that the project described in the Stormwater CIP is unambiguously the same project seeking funding,
* A printout of the Stormwater CIP priority list with a reasonable forecast of anticipated projects meeting the following requirements:
  + The proposed project must be highlighted on the priority list,
  + For the first three (3) years the priority list must contain projects and their costs by year,
  + After the first three (3) years, the priority list must contain both projects and their costs but does not need to specify the year or priority of those projects, and
* If the proposed project has moved significantly ahead of the projected date in the Stormwater CIP, explain why the project has been moved ahead of the other projects listed in the Stormwater CIP and the date on which the project was moved ahead of other projects.

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| **Notes:**   1. To qualify for these points, the project proposed for funding must be included in the adopted Stormwater CIP. 2. Submittal of the Stormwater CIP is intended only for the purpose of determining if the applicant qualifies for points under Line Item 3.B, and in no way absolves the applicant of responsibility for regulatory compliance. |

**Line Item 3.C** – Stormwater utility

An application can earn points in Line Item 3.C for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 3.C.1 or 3.C.2):

* ***Line Item 3.C.1*** – Applicant has established or is developing or implementing a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund

*5 points*

Line Item 3.C.1 is applicable if: (1) the applicant has adopted a Stormwater Utility and Stormwater Enterprise Fund, or (2) the applicant can demonstrate that it is developing or implementing a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund.

* For an applicant with an adopted Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund, the narrative must include:
* A resolution or board meeting minutes which shows a motion to approve and adopt the Stormwater Utility and establish a Stormwater Enterprise Fund,
* A statement of when the Stormwater Utility and the Stormwater Enterprise Fund began operation and when the first stormwater fees were collected,
* An official record of the amount of revenue collected in the Stormwater Enterprise Fund during the past 12 months, and
* An official record of the amount of funds expended from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund in the past 12 months, and
* A link to information about the Stormwater Utility and Stormwater Enterprise Fund including the stormwater rates and fees on the applicant’s website or provide this information on a flash drive.
* For an applicant that is developing or implementing a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund, the narrative must include:
* A statement that the applicant is developing or implementing a stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund, and
* Description of the status of the development of the stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund, and
* A statement of when the development and implementation of the stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund will be complete with an estimate of when the first stormwater enterprise fund fees will be collected.
* ***OR Line Item 3.C.2*** – Applicant has established or is developing or implementing a Stormwater Management Program without a Stormwater Enterprise Fund

*3 points*

Line Item 3.C.2 is applicable if: (1) the applicant has adopted a Stormwater Management Program, or (2) the applicant can demonstrate that it is developing or implementing a Stormwater Management Program.

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| **Notes:**   1. The stormwater management program listed for this Line Item is not required to meet the requirements of a NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Stormwater Management Plan. 2. It is not necessary for an applicant to have a Stormwater Enterprise Fund to qualify for these points. |

* For an applicant with an adopted Stormwater Management Program, the narrative must include:
* A resolution or board meeting minutes which shows a motion to approve and adopt the Stormwater Management Program,
* A statement of when the Stormwater Management Program began operation, and
* A link to information about the Stormwater Management Program on the applicant’s website or provide this information on a flash drive.
* For an applicant that is developing or implementing a Stormwater Management Program, the narrative must include:
* A statement that the applicant is developing or implementing a stormwater management program,
* Description of the status of the development or implementation of the stormwater management program, and
* A statement of when the development and implementation of the stormwater management program will be complete.

**Category 4 – Affordability**

Category 4 provides points related to affordability.

**Line Item 4.A** – Population

An application can earn points in Line Item 4.A for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 4.A.1 or 4.A.2):

* ***Line Item 4.A.1*** – The population of the applicant’s jurisdiction is less than 10,000

*3 points*

* ***OR Line Item 4.A.2*** – The population of the applicant’s jurisdiction is greater than or equal to 10,000 but less than 20,000

*2 points*

**Line Item 4.B** – Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators

*4, 6, 8, 10 or 12 points*

The Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators are used to demonstrate whether an applicant is faring better or worse in terms of these indicators than the state median. The five LGU Indicators that are used for this determination are as follows:

1. Percent population change
2. Poverty rate
3. Median household income
4. Unemployment
5. Property valuation per capita

To assist in determining whether LGU indicators are better or worse than the state benchmarks, the Division has developed two tables (one for places and one for counties, both available on the [Division application webpage](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding/application-forms-and-additional-resources#additional-resources)) to use to provide the information needed for Line Item 4.B. **These tables must be used to provide information for population change, poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment.**

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| **Note:** If the applicant is claiming points for Line Item 2.C (By working together, two or more units of local government improve stormwater quality and/or quantity control through collaborative efforts that are necessary in order to accomplish the project), use the indicators for the most distressed of the municipalities or counties participating in the collaborative effort. |

Two situations may occur in which alternate data may be utilized, as listed below:

1. *LGU Indicator No. 1 – Percent Population Change*
2. A situation may exist in which the applicant determines that the American Community Survey (ACS) data are not accurate. If this is the case, data from the NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) may be used in lieu of the ACS data.[[4]](#footnote-5) When OSBM data are used, provide as supporting documentation the reason for using the OSBM data and the data page with the applicant highlighted.
3. A case may exist in which a resident institution such as a prison, juvenile hall, or nursing home facility may open and impact the population during the five-year period that is evaluated for percent population change. If such a case exists, the institutional population may be deducted from the most recent population before the calculation for percent change in population is made. Provide supporting documentation that shows the facility name, the population of the institution, and the year the facility opened.
4. *LGU Indicator No. 2 – Property Valuation per Capita*
5. If the applicant does not have an audit that is current and on file with the NC Department of State Treasurer Local Government Commission (LGC), then the applicant will not receive credit for the property valuation per capita LGU indicator. In its analysis, Division staff will count that particular parameter as better than the state benchmark.
6. If the service area is outside of a municipality, then three options exist:
7. The county property valuation per capita figure may be used.
8. If the service area is in a defined area such as a Census Designated Place (CDP), the applicant may utilize tax maps to determine the total taxable property value within the defined area. That result would then be divided by the population in the CDP. As supporting documentation, provide a map that shows the boundaries of the CDP and the applicant’s jurisdiction. Additionally, provide a copy of the spreadsheet used to calculate the CDP’s total taxable property value and property valuation per capita. This may be supplied in the application as a scanned document.
9. For a jurisdiction that is not in a defined CDP, the applicant may utilize tax maps to determine the total taxable property value of the area. Estimate the population of the area by determining the total number of houses and using the persons per household figure for the applicant’s county. This information may be found in the [ACS data available online](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/). Supply as part of the documentation a map showing the total number of houses in the jurisdiction, a spreadsheet of the total taxable property value calculation, the persons per household for the county from the ACS, and the calculation of the jurisdiction population as well as property valuation per capita.

An application can earn points in Line Item 4.B for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.3, 4.B.4, or 4.B.5) based on the LGU economic indicators as noted above:

* ***Line Item 4.B.1*** – 1 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 4 points
* ***OR Line Item 4.B.2*** – 2 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 6 points
* ***OR Line Item 4.B.3*** – 3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 8 points
* ***OR Line Item 4.B.***4 – 4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 10 points
* ***OR Line Item 4.B.5*** – 5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 12 points

The narrative for Line Item 4.B must include the following table with the information entered by the applicant in the last column:

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| **Local Government Unit Indicator** |  | **State Benchmarks for Fall 2022 Applications** | **Applicant to Enter Value of Local Government Unit Indicators [[5]](#footnote-6),[[6]](#footnote-7),[[7]](#footnote-8)** |
| 1. Population Change | **< =** | 4.5% |  |
| 1. Poverty Rate | **> =** | 14.0% |  |
| 1. Median Household Income | **< =** | $56,642 |  |
| 1. Unemployment Rate | **> =** | 7.1% |  |
| 1. Per Capita Appraised Value of Property | **< =** | $125,015 |  |

**Line Item 4.C** – Project benefits disadvantaged areas

*10 points*

To be eligible, 50 percent or more of the project costs (as delineated in the Project Budget) must be used to directly benefit disadvantaged areas.

Disadvantaged areas may be subsections or pockets of a City’s or County’s jurisdiction, rather than the entire City or County. For instance, disadvantaged areas may be census block groups that meet qualifying characteristics. The targeted project area will be determined a “disadvantaged area” based on factors that shall include:

* Median household income, poverty rates, per capita appraised property values of property, and/or employment rates of the targeted project area,
* Additional factors that may qualify the targeted project area as disadvantaged, such as but not limited to demographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic stressors, or cost-of-living stressors may also be considered.

Use of federal or state-generated maps to demonstrate that a targeted project area is disadvantaged is encouraged. For instance, using screenshots or printouts of NC DEQ’s [Community Mapping System](https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/deq-north-carolina-community-mapping-system), labeling and identifying on the map the targeted project area overlapping “Potentially Underserved Block Groups” and/or “Tribal Boundaries” that appear on the online map as shaded areas (these are considered disadvantaged areas).

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| **Note:** For this line item, the proposed project is not required to be located *within* a disadvantaged area, but the project *must result in* water quality improvements within the disadvantaged area and/or reduce water quantity impacts within the disadvantaged area. Over 50 percent of the total project costs must be labeled in the Project Budget as necessary for the project to provide these benefits to the disadvantaged areas to qualify under line item 4.C. |

To document that the direct beneficiaries of the project are disadvantaged, the narrative must provide:

* A map showing the disadvantaged area and the location of the proposed project,
* Narrative must sufficiently describe disadvantaged factors of the areas where the project benefits will accrue, including median household income, poverty rates, per capita appraised property values of property, and/or employment rates of the targeted project area. Additional factors that may qualify the benefiting areas as disadvantaged, such as but not limited to demographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic stressors, or cost-of-living stressors,
* If using a federal or state-generated map identifying disadvantaged areas, screenshots or printouts of the map showing where the project benefits will accrue overlayed with areas that are disadvantaged. For example, a screenshot or printout of NC DEQ’s [Community Mapping System](https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/deq-north-carolina-community-mapping-system) with project location and areas in which project benefits are anticipated drawn in on top of Potentially Underserved Block Groups and/or Tribal Boundaries, which are disadvantaged areas,
* A description of the stormwater quality issue and/or the stormwater quantity issue that is occurring within the disadvantaged area, based on historic or projected precipitation,
* A description of how the proposed project will directly improve the water quality issue within the disadvantaged area or how the proposed project will directly reduce the severity and frequency of flooding that occurs within the disadvantaged area, based on historic or projected precipitation, and
* If the proposed project will address both stormwater quality and stormwater quantity issues, a separate narrative must be provided for each issue, and separate descriptions must be provided for each issue.

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| **Notes:**  The Project Budget provided as part of the application must list costs for portions of the project that will benefit disadvantaged areas and these costs must be labeled and shown separately. If these costs are not labeled and shown separately, or do not demonstrate that 50 percent or more of the total project cost will be used to benefit disadvantaged areas, the applicant will not be awarded points for Line Item 4.C. |

**D. Narrative and Documentation Required to Support Stormwater Planning Study Priority Rating System Points**

**Stormwater Planning Study Application Submittal Requirements**

**A Stormwater Planning Study Priority Rating System narrative along with supporting documentation as required by this Guidance Document must be submitted with the funding application.** **The narrative for a stormwater planning study must begin with:**

1. **A statement of the top three (3) stormwater-related challenges facing the applicant in the next five (5) years, and**
2. **A detailed description of the proposed planning study, the goals that the study is intended to meet, a concise scope of work for the proposed study, and the deliverables that are expected.**
3. A narrative that supports the points claimed in the Stormwater Planning Priority Rating System is a required part of the application. The three categories below correspond to the categories in the Priority Rating System score sheet. **Address every applicable line item.** If a line item is not applicable, include the line item and place “Not Applicable” next to it. Unlike the Stormwater Construction Priority Rating System, the Stormwater Planning Priority Rating System does not provide points for Project Purpose.

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| --- | --- |
| Category 1 | Project Benefits |
| Category 2 | System Management |
| Category 3 | Affordability |

* The narrative must be consistent with information provided in the Division of Water Infrastructure Application for Funding (DWI Application) and other supporting information.
* The narrative must be complete to provide for accurate scoring and concise enough that critical information is not lost in unnecessary text. Text should only provide information that supports the award of points in the Stormwater Planning Study Priority Rating System (i.e., do not describe other benefits that are not included in the Priority Rating System).
* If there are no applicable points in any given category, state that there are no applicable points under that category.

1. Maps are preferred and for some line items are required as noted in the line items below. Maps should include sufficient labels of geographical references and be at a readable scale. Individual line items may require specific maps as listed below.
2. Submit all supporting documentation to determine priority points, with the funding application. The Division will not request additional information or documentation. The Division will determine priority points based solely on the information submitted.
3. The Division reviews each application (even multiple applications from the same applicant) as a stand-alone application. The Division will not search other applications from the same applicant for missing information. Provide all relevant information in each application, even if it is submitted in a different application.
4. Be sure each copy of the application includes all required or relevant information and signatures.

**Examples of Eligible Uses for Stormwater Planning Studies**

The Stormwater Planning Priority Rating System does not provide points for Project Purpose. While not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following are examples of eligible uses of Stormwater Planning study funds:

1. Stormwater Asset Inventory **and** Asset Conditions Assessment: The scope of work requires a complete stormwater asset inventory **and** a complete stormwater asset condition assessment. **Preparing only an asset inventory, or only an asset condition assessment, or only stormwater asset mapping is not eligible for funding.**
2. Stormwater rate or fee development
3. Planning for a stormwater utility or the development and implementation of a stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund. Some of the activities that may be necessary are listed below:
4. Establish a citizen stakeholder group to ensure that potentially affected citizens participate in the development and implementation process. Citizen stakeholder groups often include residential property owners, businesses, non-profit institutions, developers, and environmental groups.
5. Engage the services of an outside entity or entities to guide elected officials and the citizen stakeholder group through the utility planning and development process.
6. Determine types of stormwater services to be provided including whether the stormwater utility will expend funds on privately owned property.
7. Determine the level of service (LOS) to be provided. The LOS to be provided is usually a measure of the system’s function, ability, and/or capacity with respect to a defined set of performance criteria; the criteria may be used as benchmarks to gage the performance of the applicant’s existing system.
8. Develop stormwater utility fees and/or rate structures.
9. Establish a project priority rating system to ensure that decisions about the use of the stormwater utility funds will be made in a transparent manner.
10. Determine staff positions that will be needed to implement all aspects of the stormwater utility and prepare job descriptions these staff.
11. Prior to implementing the stormwater utility, create public education information materials, a website, or other methods of ensuring that the public is made aware of the development and implementation of the stormwater utility.
12. Develop ordinances to be adopted by the elected officials to create and implement the stormwater utility.
13. Establish stormwater billing system(s).
14. Develop a watershed plan
15. Develop a stormwater management plan/program: This plan/program is not required to meet the requirements of a NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Stormwater Management Plan
16. Develop a plan for the restoration of streams, wetlands, buffers, or estuaries
17. Develop a stormwater infrastructure operation and maintenance plan
18. Develop a stormwater capital improvement plan (CIP) that identifies projects for at least five (5) years
19. Hydrologic **and** hydraulic modeling: The scope of work requires both hydrologic **and** hydraulic modeling. **Preparing only a hydrologic model or only a hydraulic model is not eligible for funding**.
20. In a collaborative effort with other units of local government, study challenges and benefits for the LGUs to collaborate on watershed and/or stormwater planning and management

**Stormwater Planning Study Priority Rating System Narrative Guidance**

**Category 1 – Project Benefits**

**Line Item 1.A** –Link between stormwater challenges and how the study will help address the challenges

*Range from 0 to 5 points*

A range from zero to five (0 to 5) points may be earned in Line Item 1.A. The number of points that will be awarded will depend on the degree to which the proposed project will resolve one or more of the applicant’s top three (3) stormwater-related challenges. The narrative for Line Item 1.A must include the following:

* Description of how the proposed stormwater planning study will help address at least one of the top three challenges stated at the beginning of the narrative, including technical or operational challenges, organizational barriers, and financial limitations,
* If the applicant has participated in a previous study, describe the study’s goals and intent, alternatives evaluated, levels of commitment, and reason(s) for its success or failure,
* Description of how this study will differ from past studies, and
* If the applicant has not participated in a previous study, discuss whether such a study was previously considered, and the barriers which inhibited the study from proceeding, and
* If any of the top three (3) challenges are related to a specific location within the applicant’s jurisdiction, a map that shows these locations and the project location.

**Line Item 1.B** – How the study will be used to develop and prioritize future projects that address the challenges

*Range from 0 to 3 points*

A range from zero to three (0 to 3) points may be earned in Line Item 1.B. The number of points that will be awarded will depend on the degree to which the results of the proposed project will be used by the applicant to address one or more of the applicant’s top three stormwater-related challenges. The narrative for Line Item 1.B must include the following:

* Description of how the proposed study will result in the identification of solutions that, when implemented, will resolve one or more of the top three challenges stated at the beginning of the narrative,
* Description of how the applicant will use the results of the proposed study to develop and prioritize future stormwater projects, and
* Description of how the applicant will use the results of the proposed study to prioritize funding for the identified future stormwater project, such as inclusion in the applicant’s stormwater capital improvement plan (CIP), and how the source of the funding for the future project will be determined.

**Line Item 1.C** – Study will investigate new procedures to implement, add to, or make improvements to at least one (1) of the six (6) Stormwater Minimum Control Measures as defined in the NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit

*2 points*

To qualify for points under this line item, the study must address at least one of the following six Minimum Control Measures (MCM) as defined in the NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit (information available at [NPDES MS4 Program | NC DEQ](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/energy-mineral-and-land-resources/stormwater/stormwater-program/npdes-ms4-program-2)):

1. Public Education and Outreach,
2. Public Involvement and Participation,
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination,
4. Construction Site Runoff Controls,
5. Post-Construction Site Runoff Controls, and
6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations.

The narrative must include:

* Statement of any or all of the six MCM(s) that have already been implemented within your jurisdiction and the date of implementation,
* Statement of the MCM(s) that will be the subject of this study, and whether the study will address the implementation of MCM(s), the addition of new MCM(s) that have never been implemented, or improvements to existing MCM(s), and
* Statement of the anticipated results, such as new ordinances or regulatory mechanisms, illicit discharge reporting and tracing procedures, or development and enforcement procedures for post-construction site runoff controls, etc., and the anticipated date that that the MCM(s) will be implemented.

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| **Note:** The applicant is not required to hold a NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit to be eligible for points in Line Item 1.C. |

**Line Item 1.D** – Study is a collaborative effort with other local government units which is necessary in order to accomplish the goals of the study

*3 points*

Recognizing that stormwater issues often cross jurisdictional boundaries, two or more units of local government may agree to collaborate on a proposed study. To qualify for points under this line item, the narrative must describe how the collaboration is necessary to accomplish the goals of the study. The narrative must include:

* A resolution or board meeting minutes from each of the units of local government that will participate in the collaborative effort, which shows a motion to approve participation in the collaborative stormwater planning study,
* A map that shows the project location and the line of demarcation between the jurisdictions participating in the proposed project,
* Description of the goals and outcomes of the proposed collaborative stormwater study, and the expected benefit to one or more of the jurisdictions participating in the proposed study,
* Description of why it is necessary for each unit of local government to participate in the proposed study in order to meet the goals of the proposed study,
* Discussion of previous collaboration between or among the units of local government that will participate in the proposed study, the reasons for the previous collaboration(s), and the achievements and benefits of the collaboration(s) for all the entities that were involved, and
* Description of the status of any previous stormwater quality or quantity work directly related to the proposed study by any of the units of local government that will participate in the proposed study.

**Line Item 1.E** – Study will evaluate potential projects that will benefit: a subwatershed that is impaired as noted on the most recent final version of the Integrated Report; specific classified waters; Nutrient Sensitive Waters such that the project will achieve at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP); or a NC Natural Heritage Program natural area

*2 points*

A project qualifies for points under this line item if the study will result in identifying methods that will support the protection of the waters listed above or identify solutions to stormwater quality and/or stormwater quantity issues in a NC Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) natural area that is rated as “General” or above.

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| **Note:** Specific classified waters are identified as HQW, ORW, Tr, SA, UWL, PNA, AFSA, SAV, WS-I, WS-II, WS-III\*, and WS-IV\* (\* see note below). |

* For a study to evaluate potential projects that will benefit a subwatershed that is impaired as noted on the most recent final version of the Integrated Report or specific classified waters, the narrative must include:
* River basin name, stream name, the 8-digit HUC for the subbasin, the Assessment Unit, index number, and stream classification,
* Watershed classification which must be consistent with the subwatershed or Basinwide Water Quality Plan,
* A discussion of the impairment, a reference for the impairment and discussion of how the project will result in a plan to help resolve the impairment,
* A discussion of the types of methods that will be evaluated to benefit specific classified waters,
* A map that places an “X” on the specific project location and stream location with impaired segment highlighted, and/or location of the specific classified waters as well as sufficient labeled landmarks such as roads, streams, political boundaries, etc. to identify the location of the project.

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| **Note:** \* To qualify for points related to the classifications of WS-III or WS-IV, the study area must be covered by an approved Source Water Protection Plan. The narrative must include a letter from the NC DEQ Division of Water Resources Public Water Supply Section confirming that the study area is covered by an approved Source Water Protection Plan. |

* For a study to evaluate potential projects that will benefit Nutrient Sensitive Waters such that the project will achieve at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP), the narrative must include:
* River basin name, stream name, index number, and stream classification,
* Watershed classification which must be consistent with the watershed or Basinwide Water Quality Plan,
* A statement that the project will adhere to the NC Stormwater Control Measure Credit Document requirements for regulatory credits, and
* A statement of the percentage reductions that are anticipated to be achieved once the evaluated project is completed.
* For a study to evaluate potential projects that will benefit NC Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) natural area, the narrative must include:
  + Description of the stormwater quality and/or stormwater quantity issue(s) in the NCNHP natural area that is rated as “General” or above as shown on the NCNHP natural areas map,
  + Description of the types of projects that will be evaluated in the study and how those types of projects would improve water quality or reduce stormwater quantity issues in the NCNHP natural area,
  + Screenshots/printouts of the NCNHP natural area as displayed on the map found at this location: <https://ncnhde.natureserve.org/content/map>, and
  + On the screenshot/printout, identify the study location with labeled landmarks such as roads, streams, political boundaries, etc. to identify the location of the project.

Additional resources are available as follows:

* ***Resource #1:*** The Integrated Report may be found at this website: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/modeling-assessment/water-quality-data-assessment/integrated-report-files>
* ***Resource #2:*** Basinwide Assessment Reports may also be helpful in describing the impairment issues and how the project will directly improve or address the impairment; these reports may be found at <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/basin-planning>. If used, please cite the report name, date, and page number.
* ***Resource #3:*** GIS layers are available at <http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/>. In addition, the DWR’s Planning Section has GIS layers for impaired streams at <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/basin-planning/maps>. This stream layer includes the stream name and impairment category (whether impaired or not). See Figure 2 below.
* ***Resource #4:***  To determine the watershed classification, the DWR Planning Section provides classification lists and GIS layers to locate and document the location of the specific classified waters and their respective classifications at <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/basin-planning/maps>.

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

Impairment category (Cat. 4 in this example)

Impaired Stream (highlighted)

Project area

**Figure 2 – Example of GIS layer for stream impairment**

**Line Item 1.F** – Study will evaluate nature-based stormwater solutions to address the identified stormwater quality or stormwater quantity issue

*2 points*

The narrative must clearly demonstrate how the solutions to be evaluated meet the definition of a nature-based stormwater solution. The solutions to be evaluated in the study must comply with NCGA Session Law 2021-180 Section 12.14.(h) which defines nature-based solutions as “sustainable planning, design, environmental management, and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to store, infiltrate, and treat water by enlisting natural features and processes in efforts to promote resilience, reduce flood risks, improve water quality, protect coastal property, restore and protect wetlands, stabilize shorelines, and add recreational space.”

If the narrative fails to clearly demonstrate how the solutions to be evaluated meet the definition of a nature-based stormwater solution, points under this line item will not be awarded.

**Line Item 1.G** – Study will investigate the applicability of an innovative stormwater project to address stormwater quantity, or as described in the “Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs” section of the current NC Land and Water Fund Innovative Stormwater Program Manual to address stormwater quality

*2 points*

The North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) is a program of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Division of Land and Water Stewardship. The NCLWF has funded innovative stormwater projects since 2008, has an Innovative Stormwater Program, and an Innovative Stormwater Program Manual.

To qualify for points in Line Item 1.G for projects to address stormwater quality, the project must investigate the applicability of a documented innovative stormwater project as described in the *“Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs – What Types of Projects are Appropriate”* section of the current NCLWF Innovative Stormwater Program Manual (<https://nclwf.nc.gov/media/92/open>), or as listed in the NC DEQ Stormwater Design Manual section entitled *“Areas of Research Needed”* available here: [Stormwater Design Manual | NC DEQ](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/energy-mineral-and-land-resources/stormwater/stormwater-program/stormwater-design).

* For an innovative project to address stormwater quantity, the narrative must include:
* The reason that the proposed study should be considered an investigation of an innovative stormwater quantity project,
* Description of how the proposed study will support the utilization of new or different practices in stormwater quantity management,
* Description of how the proposed study will build on current stormwater quantity management experience and practices,
* Description of how the proposed study will advance practices in stormwater quantity management regionally or statewide, and
* Description of how the applicant will disseminate findings and results.
* For an innovative project to address stormwater quality, the narrative must include:
* Documentation that establishes that the study will investigate an innovative project as described in the *“Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs – What Types of Projects are Appropriate”* section of the current NCLWF Innovative Stormwater Program Manual and/or documentation that establishes that the study will investigate a project described in the NC DEQ Stormwater Design Manual section entitled *“Areas of Research Needed”*
* Description of how the proposed study will support the utilization of new or different practices in stormwater quality management,
* Description of how the proposed study will build on current stormwater quality management experience and practices,
* Description of how the proposed study will advance practices in stormwater quality management regionally or statewide, and
* Description of how the applicant will disseminate findings and results.

**Line Item 1.H** – Study will evaluate potential projects that will address flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes with the goal to decrease vulnerability to future conditions

*1 point*

To qualify for points under this line item, the proposed study must evaluate potential projects that will address flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes with the goal to decrease vulnerability to future conditions. The narrative must include:

* How the potential projects to be evaluated will address flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes,
* How the potential projects to be evaluated will achieve decreasing vulnerability to future conditions,
* Timeframe that the study will address, and
* Concise summary of the future conditions that will be utilized in the study to complete the vulnerability assessment.

**Category 2 – System Management**

**Line Item 2.A** – At least one person working for or with the applicant is designated as responsible for stormwater management and provides at least 0.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) on stormwater management activities

*1 point*

To qualify for points under this line item, the applicant must document that at least 0.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) are actively spending their time on stormwater management activities. It is not necessary for the 0.5 FTEs to be directly employed by the applicant; the 0.5 FTEs can be a consultant under contract to the applicant. The narrative must include:

* Identify, by title, the 0.5 FTEs designated as responsible for stormwater management and that actively spends their time on stormwater management activities,
* Description of the person’s day-to-day stormwater management responsibilities and activities,
* Description of the person’s stormwater management qualifications and experience, and any training the person has received in stormwater management in the past three (3) years, and
* If a consultant is under contract to the applicant to provide the 0.5 FTEs, provide the contract between the consultant and the applicant; the contract must clearly identify the activities for which the person is responsible and the amount of time required by the contract to be dedicated to the applicant’s stormwater management activities.

**Line Item 2.B** – Status of implementing results of previous planning study or studies

*1 point*

To qualify for points under this line item, the applicant must describe a previous planning study or planning studies which it has undertaken, and the status of implementing the recommendations of the study or studies. The previous study does not have to be stormwater-related, but if previous stormwater studies have been undertaken, it would be appropriate to include them for this line item. The narrative must include:

* Description of the previous planning study or studies and the goals of the study or studies,
* The recommendations of the previous planning study or studies,
* The date of study completion, and
* The status of implementing the recommendations of the previous planning study or studies.

**Line Item 2.C** – Level of applicant’s staff involvement in planning study development and implementation

*1 point*

To qualify for points under this line item, the applicant must document its staff members’ involvement in developing the ideas for the proposed planning study and the involvement of its staff in both the execution and implementation of this planning study. This line item must address the applicant’s staff members, not consultants under contract to the applicant. The narrative must include:

* Title and description of the role of each member of the applicant’s staff that was involved in developing the ideas for this proposed stormwater planning study,
* How the members of the applicant’s staff will be involved in the execution of the proposed planning study,
* How the members of the applicant’s staff will be involved in the implementation of the recommendations of the proposed planning study, and
* The role of these members of the applicant’s staff in future stormwater management activities.

**Line Item 2.D** – Applicant has already adopted a stormwater management plan for the study area or by the completion of this project will have adopted a stormwater management plan for the study area

*4 points*

To qualify for points under this line item, the applicant must document that it has already adopted a stormwater management plan for the planning study area or provide a statement that it will adopt a stormwater management plan for the planning study area by the completion of this proposed planning study.

* For an applicant with an adopted stormwater management plan for the study area, the narrative must include:
* A resolution or board meeting minutes which shows a motion to approve and adopt the stormwater management plan for the planning study area, and
* A link to the adopted stormwater management plan for the study area on the applicant’s website or provide this information on a flash drive.
* For an applicant that will by the completion of this project have adopted a stormwater management plan for the study area, the narrative must include:
* A statement that the applicant will adopt a stormwater management plan for the planning study area by the completion of this proposed planning study, and
* Description of the status of the development of the plan and the anticipated timeline for plan completion and adoption.

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| **Note:** The stormwater management plan listed for Line Item 2.D is not required to meet the requirements of a NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Stormwater Management Plan. |

**Line Item 2.E** – Stormwater Utility and Stormwater Enterprise Fund

An application can earn points in Line Item 2.E for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 2.E.1 or 2.E.2):

* ***Line Item 2.E.1*** – Applicant has a Stormwater Utility and a Stormwater Enterprise Fund

*4 points*

For an applicant with an adopted and implemented stormwater utility and a stormwater enterprise fund, the narrative must include:

* A resolution or board meeting minutes which shows a motion to approve and adopt the Stormwater Utility and establish a Stormwater Enterprise Fund,
* A statement of when the Stormwater Utility and the Stormwater Enterprise Fund began operation and when the first stormwater fees were collected,
* An official record of the amount of revenue collected in the Stormwater Enterprise Fund during the past 12 months, and
* An official record of the amount of funds expended from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund in the past 12 months, and
* A link to information about the Stormwater Utility and Stormwater Enterprise Fund on the applicant’s website or provide this information on a flash drive.
* ***OR Line Item 2.E.2*** – Applicant has a Resolution to Develop and Implement a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund

*5 points*

For an applicant with an adopted resolution to develop and implement a stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund, the narrative must include:

* A Resolution to Develop and Implement a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund to Support its Application for a Proposed Stormwater Planning Study Funded with LASII Funds[[8]](#footnote-9),
* Description of the status of the development of the stormwater utility with a stormwater enterprise fund, the anticipated timeline for implementation of the stormwater utility with the stormwater enterprise fund, and an estimate of when the first stormwater fees will be collected.

**Category 3 – Affordability**

Category 3 provides points related to affordability.

**Line Item 3.A** – Population

An application can earn points in Line Item 3.A for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 3.A.1 or 3.A.2):

* ***Line Item 3.A.1*** – The population of the applicant’s jurisdiction is less than 10,000

*2 points*

* ***OR Line Item 3.A.2*** – The population of the applicant’s jurisdiction is greater than or equal to 10,000 but less than 20,000

*1 point*

**Line Item 3.B** – Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators

*2, 4, 6, 8, or 10 points*

The Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators are used to demonstrate whether an applicant is faring better or worse in terms of these indicators than the state median. The five LGU Indicators that are used for this determination are as follows:

1. Percent population change
2. Poverty rate
3. Median household income
4. Unemployment
5. Property valuation per capita

To assist in determining whether LGU indicators are better or worse than the state benchmarks, the Division has developed two tables (one for places and one for counties, both available on the [Division application webpage](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding/application-forms-and-additional-resources#additional-resources)) to use to provide the information needed for Line Item 3.B. **These tables must be used to provide information for population change, poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment.**

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| **Note:** If the applicant is claiming points for Line Item 1.D (Study is a collaborative effort with other local government units which is necessary in order to accomplish the goals of the study) use the indicators for the most distressed of the municipalities or counties participating in the collaborative effort. |

Two situations may occur in which alternate data may be utilized, as listed below:

1. *LGU Indicator No. 1 – Percent Population Change*
2. A situation may exist in which the applicant determines that the American Community Survey (ACS) data are not accurate. If this is the case, data from the NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) may be used in lieu of the ACS data.[[9]](#footnote-10) When OSBM data are used, provide as supporting documentation the reason for using the OSBM data and the data page with the applicant highlighted.
3. A case may exist in which a resident institution such as a prison, juvenile hall, or nursing home facility may open and impact the population during the five-year period that is evaluated for percent population change. If such a case exists, the institutional population may be deducted from the most recent population before the calculation for percent change in population is made. Provide supporting documentation that shows the facility name, the population of the institution, and the year the facility opened.
4. *LGU Indicator No. 2 – Property Valuation per Capita*
5. If the applicant does not have an audit that is current and on file with the NC Department of State Treasurer Local Government Commission (LGC), then the applicant will not receive credit for the property valuation per capita LGU indicator. In its analysis, Division staff will count that particular parameter as better than the state benchmark.
6. If the service area is outside of a municipality, then three options exist:
7. The county property valuation per capita figure may be used.
8. If the service area is in a defined area such as a Census Designated Place (CDP), the applicant may utilize tax maps to determine the total taxable property value within the defined area. That result would then be divided by the population in the CDP. As supporting documentation, provide a map that shows the boundaries of the CDP and the applicant’s jurisdiction. Additionally, provide a copy of the spreadsheet used to calculate the CDP’s total taxable property value and property valuation per capita. This may be supplied in the application as a scanned document.
9. For a jurisdiction that is not in a defined CDP, the applicant may utilize tax maps to determine the total taxable property value of the area. Estimate the population of the area by determining the total number of houses and using the persons per household figure for the applicant’s county. This information may be found in the [ACS data available online](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/). Supply as part of the documentation a map showing the total number of houses in the jurisdiction, a spreadsheet of the total taxable property value calculation, the persons per household for the county from the ACS, and the calculation of the jurisdiction population as well as property valuation per capita.

An application can earn points in Line Item 3.B for only one of the following sub-categories (Line Item 3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3, 3.B.4, or 3.B.5) based on the LGU economic indicators as noted above:

* ***Line Item 3.B.1*** – 1 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 2 points
* ***OR Line Item 3.B.2*** – 2 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 4 points
* ***OR Line Item 3.B.3*** – 3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 6 points
* ***OR Line Item 3.B.***4 – 4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 8 points
* ***OR Line Item 3.B.5*** – 5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark: 10 points

The narrative for Line Item 3.B must include the following table with the information entered by the applicant in the last column:

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| **Local Government Unit Indicator** |  | **State Benchmarks for Fall 2022 Applications** | **Applicant to Enter Value of Local Government Unit Indicators [[10]](#footnote-11),[[11]](#footnote-12),[[12]](#footnote-13)** |
| 1. Population Change | **< =** | 4.5% |  |
| 1. Poverty Rate | **> =** | 14.0% |  |
| 1. Median Household Income | **< =** | $56,642 |  |
| 1. Unemployment Rate | **> =** | 7.1% |  |
| 1. Per Capita Appraised Value of Property | **< =** | $125,015 |  |

**Line Item 3.C** – Study benefits disadvantaged areas

*8 points*

To qualify for points under Line Item 3.C, the study area must include a disadvantaged area.

Disadvantaged areas may be subsections or pockets of a City’s or County’s jurisdiction, rather than the entire City or County. For instance, disadvantaged areas may be census block groups that meet qualifying characteristics. The targeted project area will be determined a “disadvantaged area” based on factors that shall include:

* Median household income, poverty rates, per capita appraised property values of property, and/or employment rates of the targeted project area,
* Additional factors that may qualify the targeted project area as disadvantaged, such as but not limited to demographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic stressors, or cost-of-living stressors may also be considered.

Use of federal or state-generated maps to demonstrate that a targeted project area is disadvantaged is encouraged. For instance, using screenshots or printouts of NC DEQ’s [Community Mapping System](https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/deq-north-carolina-community-mapping-system), labeling and identifying on the map the targeted project area overlapping “Potentially Underserved Block Groups” and/or “Tribal Boundaries” that appear on the online map as shaded areas (these are considered disadvantaged areas).

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| **Note:** For this line item, the proposed project is not required to be located *within* a disadvantaged area, but the project *must result in* water quality improvements within the disadvantaged area and/or reduce water quantity impacts within the disadvantaged area. |

To document that the direct beneficiaries of the project are disadvantaged, the narrative must provide:

* A map showing the disadvantaged area and the location of the proposed project,
* Narrative must sufficiently describe disadvantaged factors of the areas where the project benefits will accrue, including median household income, poverty rates, per capita appraised property values of property, and/or employment rates of the targeted project area. Additional factors that may qualify the benefiting areas as disadvantaged, such as but not limited to demographic, historical, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic stressors, or cost-of-living stressors,
* If using a federal or state-generated map identifying disadvantaged areas, screenshots or printouts of the map showing where the project benefits will accrue overlayed with areas that are disadvantaged. For example, a screenshot or printout of NC DEQ’s [Community Mapping System](https://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/environmental-justice/deq-north-carolina-community-mapping-system) with project location and areas in which project benefits are anticipated drawn in on top of Potentially Underserved Block Groups and/or Tribal Boundaries, which are disadvantaged areas,
* A description of the stormwater quality issue and/or the stormwater quantity issue that is occurring within the disadvantaged area, based on historic or projected precipitation,
* A description of how the proposed project will directly improve the water quality issue within the disadvantaged area or how the proposed project will directly reduce the severity and frequency of flooding that occurs within the disadvantaged area, based on historic or projected precipitation, and
* If the proposed project will address both stormwater quality and stormwater quantity issues, a separate narrative must be provided for each issue, and separate descriptions must be provided for each issue.

| **Priority Rating System Score Sheet for Stormwater Construction Projects**  Funded with the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investment (LASII) Grants | | | |
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| **Instructions for Applicant: For each line item, place an “X” to claim the points for that line item. Be sure that the required narrative includes justification for every line item claimed. At the end of each category, provide the total points claimed for each program in the subtotal row for that category. Then add the subtotals from each category and enter the Total Points for All Categories in the last line. *Note that some categories have a maximum allowed points that may be less than the total of individual line items.*** | | | |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 1 – Project Purpose**  **Points will be awarded for only one Project Purpose: 1.A or 1.B or 1.C** | **Place “X” in this box if claimed** | **Points** |
| **1.A** | More than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create new stormwater control measures (SCMs) or to improve, retrofit, repair, rehabilitate or replace existing SCM infrastructure to control stormwater quality |  |  |
| 1.A.1 | Proposed SCMs are nature-based solutions, **OR** |  | 35 |
| 1.A.2 | Proposed SCMs are not nature-based solutions |  | 25 |
| **1.B** | Restoration of streams, wetlands, buffers, or estuaries to control stormwater quality |  | 25 |
| 1.B.1 | Project includes restoration of a first order stream and includes stormwater infiltration SCMs |  | 2 (additional points) |
| 1.B.2 | Project includes restoration of permanent riparian buffers to at least 30 feet on both sides of the stream |  | 2 (additional points) |
| **1.C** | More than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create or improve, retrofit, repair, rehabilitate or replace existing stormwater infrastructure to control stormwater quantity |  | 25 |
| **Maximum points available for Category 1 – Project Purpose** | | | **35** |
| **Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 1 – Project Purpose** | | |  |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 2 – Project Benefits** | **Place “X” in this box if claimed** | **Points** |
| **2.A** | Water Quality Improvement |  |  |
| 2.A.1 | Project directly benefits subwatersheds that are impaired as noted on the most recent final version of the Integrated Report, **OR** |  | 15 |
| 2.A.2 | Project directly benefits specific classified waters, **OR** |  | 10 |
| 2.A.3 | Achieves at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) in Nutrient Sensitive Waters, **OR** |  | 10 |
| 2.A.4 | Achieves at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) in Non-Nutrient Sensitive Waters, **OR** |  | 5 |
| 2.A.5 | Directly benefits a NC Natural Heritage Program natural area |  | 3 |
| **2.B** | Flood Reduction |  |  |
| 2.B.1 | Increases public safety by improving the applicant’s ability to access and operate critical infrastructure during flood events such as water and/or wastewater treatment infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and/or emergency response facilities,including NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Evacuation Routes, **OR** |  | 15 |
| 2.B.2 | Reduces structural flooding in habitable structures or improves ability to access habitable structures during a flood event, **OR** |  | 8 |
| 2.B.3 | Reduces street flooding |  | 5 |
| **2.C** | By working together, two or more units of local government improve stormwater quality and/or quantity control through collaborative efforts that are necessary in order to accomplish the project |  | 10 |
| **2.D** | Project has been identified through a local or regional resilience planning process that included a vulnerability assessment for future conditions and long-term strategies for addressing flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes |  | 3 |
| **2.E** | Includes an innovative stormwater project to address stormwater quality or stormwater quantity |  | 5 |
| **2.F** | Includes a public education component such as signage describing the function of the stormwater quality or quantity infrastructure |  | 1 |
| **Maximum points available for Category 2 – Project Benefits** | | | **30** |
| **Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 2 – Project Benefits** | | |  |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 3 – System Management** | **Place “X” in this box if claimed** | **Points** |
| **3.A** | Local Planning |  |  |
| 3.A.1 | Applicant has developed or is developing a local flood resiliency plan, watershed plan, stormwater management plan, stream restoration plan, or estuary restoration plan, and the proposed project is included in the plan, as of the date of application, **OR** |  | 5 |
| 3.A.2 | Applicant has implemented an Operation and Maintenance Plan for stormwater infrastructure which includes inspections, repairs, and maintenance, as of the date of application |  | 3 |
| **3.B** | Applicant has a current Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that spans at least 5 years and proposed project is included in the CIP |  | 2 |
| **3.C** | Stormwater Utility |  |  |
| 3.C.1 | Applicant has established or is developing or implementing a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund, **OR** |  | 5 |
| 3.C.2 | Applicant has established or is developing or implementing a Stormwater Management Program(or Utility) without a Stormwater Enterprise Fund |  | 3 |
| **Maximum points available for Category 3 – System Management** | | | **10** |
| **Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 3 – System Management** | | |  |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 4 – Affordability** | **Place “X” in this box if claimed** | **Points** |
| **4.A** | Population |  |  |
| 4.A.1 | Population is less than 10,000, **OR** |  | 3 |
| 4.A.2 | Population is greater than or equal to 10,000 but less than 20,000 |  | 2 |
| **4.B** | Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators |  |  |
| 4.B.1 | 1 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, **OR** |  | 4 |
| 4.B.2 | 2 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, **OR** |  | 6 |
| 4.B.3 | 3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, **OR** |  | 8 |
| 4.B.4 | 4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, **OR** |  | 10 |
| 4.B.5 | 5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark |  | 12 |
| **4.C** | Project benefits disadvantaged areas: 50 percent or more of the total project cost will benefit disadvantaged areas |  | 10 |
| **Maximum points available for Category 4 – Affordability** | | | **25** |
| **Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 4 – Affordability** | | |  |
| **Total Points Claimed by Applicant for All Categories for Stormwater Construction Project** | | |  |
| **Maximum Points Available for All Categories for Stormwater Construction Project** | | | **100** |

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| **Priority Rating System Score Sheet for Stormwater Planning Study**  Funded with the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investment (LASII) Grants | | |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 1 – Project Benefits** | **Points** |
| **1.A** | Link between challenges and how the study will help address the challenges | Range from 0 – 5 |
| **1.B** | How the study will be used to develop and prioritize future projects that address the challenges | Range from 0 – 3 |
| **1.C** | Study will investigate new procedures to implement, add to, or make improvements to at least one (1) of the six (6) Stormwater Minimum Control Measures | 2 |
| **1.D** | Study is a collaborative effort with other local government units which is necessary in order to accomplish the goals of the study | 3 |
| **1.E** | Study will evaluate potential projects that will benefit: a subwatershed that is impaired as noted on the most recent final version of the Integrated Report; specific classified waters; Nutrient Sensitive Waters such that the project will achieve at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP); or a NC Natural Heritage Program natural area | 2 |
| **1.F** | Study will evaluate nature-based stormwater solutions to address the identified stormwater quality or stormwater quantity issue | 2 |
| **1.G** | Study will investigate the applicability of an innovative stormwater project to address stormwater quality or stormwater quantity | 2 |
| **1.H** | Study will evaluate potential projects that will address flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes with the goal to decrease vulnerability to future conditions | 1 |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 2 – System Management** | **Points** |
| **2.A** | At least one person working for or with the applicant is designated as responsible for stormwater management and provides at least 0.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) on stormwater management activities | 1 |
| **2.B** | Status of implementing results of previous planning study or studies | 1 |
| **2.C** | Level of applicant’s staff involvement in planning project development and implementation | 1 |
| **2.D** | Applicant has already adopted a stormwater management plan for the study area or by the completion of this project will have adopted a stormwater management plan for the study area | 4 |
| **2.E** | Stormwater Utility and Stormwater Enterprise Fund |  |
| 2.E.1 | Applicant has a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund, **OR** | 4 |
| 2.E.2 | Applicant has a Resolution to Develop and Implement a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund | 5 |
| **Line Item #** | **Category 3 – Affordability** | **Points** |
| **3.A** | Population |  |
| 3.A.1 | Population is less than 10,000, **OR** | 2 |
| 3.A.2 | Population is greater than or equal to 10,000 but less than 20,000 | 1 |
| **3.B** | Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators |  |
| 3.B.1 | 1 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, **OR** | 2 |
| 3.B.2 | 2 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, **OR** | 4 |
| 3.B.3 | 3 out of 5 LGU indicators are worse than the state benchmark, **OR** | 6 |
| 3.B.4 | 4 out of 5 LGU indicators are worse than the state benchmark, **OR** | 8 |
| 3.B.5 | 5 out of 5 LGU indicators are worse than the state benchmark | 10 |
| **3.C** | Study benefits disadvantaged areas | 8 |
| **Maximum Points Available for All Categories for Stormwater Planning Study** | | **52** |

1. “City” means municipality and includes cities, towns, and villages. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. U.S. Treasury Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. U.S. Treasury Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The website for the starting point for accessing OSBM data is <http://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. If the applicant is claiming points for Line Item 2.C, enter the LGU Indicator values for the most distressed of the municipalities or counties [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The LGU Indicator values that must be used for population change, poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment are available on the [Division application webpage](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding/application-forms-and-additional-resources#additional-resources) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. To calculate LGU Indicator No. 5 – Property valuation per capita, utilize the total taxable property value reported in the most current audit for the LGU, and divide it by the population of the LGU found on the Division application webpage link above to calculate property valuation per capita [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. An example Resolution to Develop and Implement a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund to Support its Application for a Proposed Stormwater Planning Study Funded with LASII Funds is available on the [Division’s webpage](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding/). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. The website for the starting point for accessing OSBM data is <http://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. If the applicant is claiming points for Line Item 1.D, enter the LGU Indicator values for the most distressed of the municipalities or counties [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. The LGU Indicator values that must be used for population change, poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment are available on the [Division application webpage](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding/application-forms-and-additional-resources#additional-resources) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. To calculate LGU Indicator No. 5 – Property valuation per capita, utilize the total taxable property value reported in the most current audit for the LGU, and divide it by the population of the LGU found on the Division application webpage link above to calculate property valuation per capita [↑](#footnote-ref-13)