

Stormwater utility fee programs often include a credit/fee discount or other incentive for customers who implement approved practices that reduce the impacts of stormwater on a property or in a community. Common practices can include reductions in impervious areas, installation of BMPS, managed stormwater runoff on-site, or other stormwater improvements or pollutant reduction practices. Property owners can typically reduce their bill between 20 and 50 percent. Credits are typically valid for a set period of time, after which time the property owner must reapply.

Credits

The following are examples of stormwater credits a municipality in Pennsylvania might consider for their program.

- **AGRICULTURAL LAND:**
 - **Low Impact Parcel Credit:** credit for open space lands with low impact on surface runoff
 - **Soil Conservation Plan Credit:** credit for having a current Ag erosion and sedimentation control plan
 - **Nutrient Management/Manure Management Plan Credit:** credit for having a current nutrient or manure management plan
- **STREAMSIDE LAND:**
 - **Streamside Buffer Credit:** up to “x”% credit for property owners who maintain or create a riparian buffer alongside a stream (can require minimum 25 linear feet of stream and 35-foot minimum buffer width).
 - **Stream Restoration Credit:** up to “X”% credit for property owners who complete and maintain an approved stream restoration project; usually includes criteria for minimum length and width of restoration project
- **NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES** (e.g., large commercial properties, school campuses, business parks, golf courses, cemeteries)
 - **Stormwater Rate and Volume Control BMPs** – wetlands, basins, detention areas
 - **Water Quality Treatment BMPs** - wetlands, proprietary filters, vegetated swales and filter strips
 - **Fertilizer Management** – documentation of fertilizer usage
 - **Turf and Landscape Management Program**

- **Education Program** – schools programs that include participation in such activities as water resource-themed student poster session, science fair, classroom lessons, field trips; take-home educational resources
- **BMP Easement**
- **Green Roof Installation**
- **Separate MS4 Permit** – properties that must comply with a non-municipal MS4 permit can receive “X”% credit
- **RESIDENTIAL LAND:**
 - **Green Infrastructure & Runoff Volume Control Credits:** credit for practices such as pervious pavement, rain garden/bioretention areas, and cisterns/rain barrels.
 - **Non-Structural Control Credits:** credit for practices such as tree canopy cover and downspout disconnection
- **ALL LAND:**
 - **Public Participation Credit:** credit for spending “X” number of hours participating in activities such as stream or roadside cleanups and tree planting activities; hosting or participating in educational events
 - **Adopt an Inlet:** credit for adopting an inlet and being responsible for keeping leaves and other debris away from the adopted inlet

Existing Examples of Credit Incentives

- **NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND:** Hampden Township, Cumberland County, adopted a credit policy which provides nonresidential property owners the opportunity to receive a credit of up to 50%. The policy includes credits for stormwater rate and volume control, fertilizer management, education programs, and separate MS4 permittees. Individual credit values ranged from 15% to 50% and a property owner may take advantage of multiple credits, if applicable, up to the maximum total of 50%.
- **AGRICULTURAL LAND:**
 - Silver Spring Township, Cumberland County, offers fee credits for agricultural properties by as much as 90 percent. Eligible properties start out with a 25% Low Impact Parcel Credit. Having a manure or nutrient management plan wins you another 5%; an erosion control or soil conservation plan another 30%. Verification of implementation of these plans’ BMPs awards you yet another 30%.
 - East Lampeter Township, Lancaster County, offers a 30% credit for agricultural BMPs that are planned and fully implemented; Relevant plans are worth 5% credit.

- **STREAMSIDE BUFFER INCENTIVE:** Susquehanna Township, Dauphin County, offers up to 30% credit for property owners who maintain or create a riparian buffer alongside a stream (minimum 25 linear feet of stream and 35-foot minimum buffer width).

The Credit Application Process – Tips for Success

1. Allow for site visits as a method of approval for credits related to rate and volume control. Older properties may no longer have stormwater management design plans to review therefore a common sense approach is to visit the site to field verify the functionality of a practice.
2. Provide schools with a list of stormwater educational resources that are acceptable to post and distribute to the student body and their parents as a means to enhance knowledge related to stormwater impacts on water quality and the environment. Often times it is the schools facility managers and not teachers that are responsible for stormwater management and grounds maintenance on school property.
3. Approve credits for a three-year period. This reduces the labor costs associated with application processing and review.
4. Require practices receiving credits to be operated and maintained in accordance with acceptable guidelines. Consider adopting an Operations and Maintenance guidance document for use by municipal staff and also provide a courtesy copy to customers seeking credit approval.
5. Create an web map applications accessible by the public to allow parcel searches to review areas mapped as impervious cover on a parcel basis.

Creative names for stormwater fee programs:

STREAM PROTECTION FEE - Borough of West Chester, Chester County