Green Stormwater Infrastructure Assistance Programs Guidebook

A tool for managers, planners, and other agency staff to update or create a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Assistance Program

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Acknowledgements

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Purpose and Disclaimer

This guidebook is a report of information compiled about current GSI Assistance Programs throughout Western Washington. Its purpose is to share information about these GSI Assistance Programs with agencies and municipalities looking to update or start their own program.

This report captures these GSI Assistance Programs as of 2022. These programs are continually adapting and evolving, and many have changed since this report was published. This guidebook does not obligate jurisdictions or agencies to follow any of the recommendations provided.

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About STORM

Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities (STORM), formed in 2008, is a regional coalition of over 80 Puget Sound area cities and counties working together to meet National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Stormwater Permit requirements. Their efforts focus on outreach and education to engage, build awareness, and support behavior change and personal pollution prevention related to stormwater and water quality.

Polluted stormwater runoff is the top threat to the health of our local lakes, creeks, and Puget Sound. Effectively engaging the public on this issue is a huge challenge. It requires broad, regionally consistent, and recognizable pollution prevention messaging across the Puget Sound region, as well as effective programs that address critical pollution prevention behaviors at the local level. STORM works together to meet this challenge by ensuring that regional and local stormwater outreach efforts are effective, consistent, and cost efficient.

STORM's Vision: *People living and working in our communities will take actions that protect water quality within the Puget Sound basin.*

STORM's Mission: *To work together with regional partners to address polluted rainwater runoff and impacts by advancing broad-scale education & outreach and behavior change initiatives.*

The STORM Resource Reservoir (https://www.pugetsoundstormgroup.org/) is an online sharing library of outreach and education materials created by STORM members.

Figure 1: Person watering rain garden (photo credit Katie Campbell).

Executive Summary

Many Western Washington jurisdictions, state agencies, and environmental organizations have created Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Assistance Programs. GSI Assistance Programs offer financial and/or technical assistance to help property owners convert their landscapes in ways that reduce runoff and prevent stormwater pollution. Each program is uniquely designed depending on its respective goals, type(s) of assistance offered, types of GSI options promoted, and priority audiences.

This guidebook is a report of information compiled about current GSI Assistance Programs throughout Western Washington. Its purpose is to share information about these GSI Assistance Programs with agencies looking to update or start their own program. We hope to make the process of creating or modifying a GSI Assistance Programs more efficient for agency staff by sharing insights, lessons learned, and strategies for creating and implementing a GSI Assistance Program.

The main elements covered in this guidebook include:

- An introduction to GSI Assistance Programs and overview of common GSI features
- Equity considerations in GSI Assistance Programs
- Guidance on developing, implementing, and evaluating a GSI Assistance Program
- One page overviews of current GSI Assistance Programs in Western Washington
- Recommendations on next steps for program managers looking to create or update their GSI Assistance Program

We hope this guidebook inspires agency staff and provides them with a foundational framework to begin creating or modifying their own GSI Assistance Program. Collaborative efforts to create impactful GSI Assistance Programs do not end with this guidebook! We encourage you to reach out to program managers for more information on specific GSI Assistance Programs (see the one-pagers for more information).

Definitions

Agency: a city, county, or conservation district with a GSI Assistance Program

BMP: best management practice

CSO: combined sewer overflow

DIY: do it yourself

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

FAQ: frequently asked question

GSI: green stormwater infrastructure

GSI Assistance Program: a technical and/or financial assistance program that promotes the installation of green stormwater infrastructure features

HIP: Homeowner Incentive Program

KCD: Kitsap Conservation District

LID: low impact development

NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

PCD: Pierce Conservation District

SCD: Snohomish Conservation District

STORM: Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities

TMDL: total maximum daily load

WSU: Washington State University

Introduction

What is GSI Assistance?

Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) is a range of measures that use vegetation, soils, and other elements to slow, soak up, and clean stormwater runoff.

GSI Assistance Programs have been developed by many organizations, including jurisdictions, state agencies, and environmental organizations, to assist property owners in altering their landscapes to reduce runoff and prevent pollution. These programs vary greatly and can include any combination of:

- Technical assistance
- Cost-share
- Grant funding
- Rebates
- Reimbursements
- Stormwater utility discounts

Figure 2: Downspout disconnection in progress (photo credit: City of Seattle).

GSI options

There are many types of GSI. Some capture and clean stormwater runoff, while others slow stormwater or hold it until a storm passes, reducing runoff.

The types of GSI offered by a GSI Assistance Program are a result of a variety of factors including program goals, local soil and hydrologic conditions, program budget, and existing local codes. Here are some examples of GSI features that are offered in regional GSI Assistance Programs, with definitions largely pulled from this website: https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure.

- **Downspout disconnection**: Re-routes rooftop pipes from draining rainwater into the municipal stormwater system to draining it into rain barrels, cisterns, or permeable areas.
- **Native vegetation conversion:** Removal of less pervious areas, such as patios, walkways, driveways, lawn, or invasive species, and replacing with native plants and cultivars that have deeper root systems and amended soils. Native landscaping is more capable of absorbing rainwater runoff.
- **Permeable pavement:** Surfaces that infiltrate, treat, and/or store rainwater where it falls. They can be made of pervious concrete, porous asphalt, or permeable interlocking pavers.
- **Rain barrels and cisterns:** Rainwater harvesting systems that collect and store rainfall for later use.
- **Rain gardens:** Shallow, vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff from hard surfaces, like rooftops, sidewalks, and streets. Rain gardens mimic natural hydrology by infiltrating, evaporating, and transpiring stormwater runoff.

- **Tree planting**: Trees reduce and slow stormwater by intercepting precipitation in their leaves, needles, and branches. Their roots allow rainwater to more easily filter into the soil, and they absorb water and transpire it through their leaves or needles back into the atmosphere.

Figure 3: Permeable pavement and a rain garden (photo credit: Kitsap County).

Initially Kitsap Conservation District's (KCD) cost share focused on the installation of rain gardens only. KCD found that people got excited, signed up, then were disappointed when they had a site where a rain garden would not be appropriate. People then dropped out, with no resolution. In 2014 the program was expanded to include a suite of green stormwater solutions for when a rain garden was not right for a particular site.

Barriers to Developing a GSI Assistance Program

Many barriers exist to developing a GSI Assistance Program. To characterize these barriers and identify solutions to them, the STORM GSI work group conducted an anonymous survey of key municipal staff and managers at Western Washington jurisdictions that do not currently offer a GSI Assistance Program.

Survey results identified the following five main barriers/issues (listed in no particular order) that caused, or could cause, a GSI Assistance Program to struggle to be successful:

- **Resource availability (staff and budget)**
- **Technical complexity**
- **Political disinterest**
- **Interdepartmental coordination**
- **Risk aversion**

If you are experiencing any of these barriers at your agency, then reach out to an agency with an existing GSI Assistance Program (see the Program One Pagers section). Chances are they have worked to overcome some or all of these barriers and could share their experiences and lessons learned.

Reasons for Developing a GSI Assistance Program

Achieving effective stormwater volume reduction is the primary outcome for GSI program development. To attain this at a basin or landscape scale will require reductions from private properties, particularly properties that do not otherwise manage stormwater runoff to current drainage code. This motivates agencies to offer GSI Assistance Programs that help private property owners manage stormwater onsite at the individual scale.

GSI is a cost-effective and resilient approach to managing stormwater runoff and can provide several environmental and community benefits. Examples include:

- Reduced stormwater volume and peak,
- Improved water quality by reducing pollutant loading into local waterways / Puget Sound (meet standards over time),
- Reduced erosion,
- Reduced flooding,
- Reduced combined sewer overflow (CSO) overflow area and events,
- Sparking community conversations related to water quality, and
- Improving drainage where feasible.

Information on community benefits is covered in detail in the co-benefits section.

A key impetus, or driver, for an agency to develop a GSI program is often a regulatory requirement to protect water quality or to reduce flows. Common drivers of agencies participating in this GSI survey include:

- **Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) areas**: alleviate pressures on the CSO system and reduces overflow occurrences
- **NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit**: Low Impact Development (LID) codes for new development and retrofits; stormwater plan; behavior change program
- **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)**: mandates for pollution reduction where residential participation is needed to meet reduction goals
- **Watershed protection**: improve water quality and/or reduce impervious surfaces in priority basins
- **Stormwater Management Program**: retrofit areas that lack essential stormwater controls

Purpose of the GSI Assistance Programs Survey

The STORM GSI work group was tasked with addressing the need for more collaboration within STORM and regionally (within Western Washington) around GSI Assistance Programs. Many Permittees within the STORM network already have GSI Assistance Programs, and several others have voiced interest in starting one within their jurisdiction. This guidebook is intended to help Permittees learn from each other's GSI Assistance Programs or learn how to create their own program.

The first step in creating this guidebook was survey agencies that have existing GSI Assistance Programs (GSI Assistance Program survey). The intent of the GSI Assistance Program survey was to understand how agencies set up, implement, and evaluate their GSI Assistance Programs.

GSI Assistance Program Survey Methodology

Program leads from the following agencies were interviewed for the GSI Assistance Program survey:

- City of Bellingham (Homeowner Incentive Program)
- City of Everett (Let It Rain)
- City of Kirkland (Yard Smart Rain Rewards)
- City of Lynnwood (Rain Garden Program)
- City of Olympia (Rain Garden Incentive Program)
- City of Port Angeles (Rain Garden / LID Rebate Program)
- City of Puyallup (Rain Garden Program)
- City of Seattle, King County (RainWise)
- Kitsap Conservation District (KCD) (Rain Gardens and More Program)
- Pierce Conservation District (Green Stormwater Program)
- Snohomish Conservation District (Urban Stormwater Program)
- Snohomish County (RainScaping)

These agencies were selected because they each have established, ongoing GSI Assistance Programs in Western Washington. The STORM GSI work group drafted the GSI Assistance Program survey questions and circulated a draft survey with the managers of the aforementioned GSI Assistance Programs. As part of this review, program managers had the opportunity to suggest additional survey questions.

The GSI Assistance Program survey was sent to the managers of the GSI Assistance Programs at these agencies in October 2020. Program managers answered the survey questions in a word document or participated in a phone or online meeting-based interview with a STORM GSI work group member. For phone and online meeting-based interviews, a STORM GSI work group member recorded survey responses and sent a copy of the responses to the program manager to review and confirm. Each agency's response can be found in Appendix A.

Guidebook Layout

This guidebook describes the findings from the GSI Assistance Program survey and the barrier survey. This guidebook has four main sections that are a synthesis of the insights, recommendations, and feedback from agencies with existing GSI Assistance Programs:

- Equity
- Program Set Up
- Program Implementation
- Program Evaluation

The Equity section includes strategies that some GSI Assistance Programs are currently implementing, as well as recommendations for equity resources, strategies, and goals.

In addition, the Program One Pagers section includes helpful overviews of each of the GSI Assistance Programs surveyed for this guidebook as well as a couple of additional active programs (include the GSI Mini Grants and King County's RainScapes programs).

The final section, Recommendations, includes the STORM GSI work group's recommended next steps. The guidebook concludes with the Appendices, which include the survey responses.

Note: when "GSI Assistance Programs" are mentioned throughout this guidebook, it is referring to the agencies that were surveyed for this guidebook, not all programs throughout the state or more broadly regionally. In addition, the term "green stormwater infrastructure" is used instead of "low impact development".

Figure 4: Family looking at a recently planted rain garden (photo credit: David Hymel).

Equity

There are several potential barriers to equitable participation in GSI Assistance Programs. Conducting audience research during program development can help identify and address the barriers that exist in your community. Below, notable equity-related barriers are addressed.

Barriers

Cost

A significant barrier, particularly in lower-income communities, is cost. Many GSI Assistance Programs with financial incentives reimburse property owners at the end of a project. This is a barrier for participants who do not have the means to cover costs up-front for a GSI project and are unable to wait weeks (or longer) for a rebate check. In addition, the financial incentives in some GSI Assistance Programs may not cover enough of the project costs for all community members to participate.

Below are a couple of solutions that the RainWise program, along with Stewardship Partners, created to address these cost barriers:

- **Subsidized low-cost loans to RainWise contractors**: The contractor applies for the loan and, through the course of the project, the lender issues the estimated rebate to the contractor. At the end of the project, RainWise issues the rebate to the lender. This eliminates the need for property owners to pay up front for GSI projects and wait for reimbursements. RainWise contractors work with Craft3, a non-profit lender, to secure these loans. RainWise contractors use Craft3's regular loan application process, which is user-friendly and has competitive rates.
- **RainWise Access Grants**: This program provides up to an additional $1,000 for RainWise eligible homeowners and non-profit community organizations. This increases the rebate amount, ultimately reducing total costs for participants from lower-income communities.

When agencies were asked in the GSI Assistance Program survey what they would change about their program if they could, several voiced a desire for more equitable programs. Some agencies said they wished that their financial incentives to participants were not taxable income. Others expressed interest in creating alternative GSI programs for lower income households.

Another barrier to participation is being in an area that is ineligible for a GSI Assistance Program. To address this barrier, Stewardship Partners created **GSI Mini Grants**. This program provides grants up to $1,500 for approved GSI projects to property owners within the King County Wastewater Treatment Division service area, if they are not eligible for other assistance programs. Up to $4,500 may be provided to lower-income property owners for approved GSI projects.

Strategies that decrease total project costs and reduce upfront costs to participants can increase participation in lower-income communities.

Maintenance

After completing a GSI project, maintenance is usually the responsibility of the property owner. In some cases, property owners may not be able to complete the maintenance on their own due to constraints of physical ability, time juggling multiple jobs and family, and/or costs associated with supplies or equipment. They may need to hire a landscaper or contractor to perform the work. This can raise additional equity concerns for lower-income participants, both in terms of cost and difficulty finding local businesses who serve the area.

Consider building ongoing support and communication with participants into your program to encourage regular, preventive maintenance activities. This can help reduce the need to hire a contractor for costly, major maintenance needs.

Language

Language is another equity issue and barrier to participation in GSI Assistance Programs. In order to be successful, GSI Assistance Programs need to convey the value to the property owner, property, and neighborhood – and language is key to doing this successfully.

Outreach materials are frequently only available in English. Does your priority audience speak languages besides English? Consider providing outreach materials and assistance for eligible participants in their languages so that they can better understand and engage in your program. In addition, whenever possible, consider transcreation of materials to align the message (text, graphics) to the community's cultural values, norms, and language.

In addition, use non-technical, plain language and familiar terms in GSI Assistance Program outreach materials. Aim for a grade 8 reading level in outreach materials. Using "shop talk" rather than language that resonates with your audience can be a quick turnoff. Many online tools exist to help you simplify your language, such as www.hemingwayapp.com, which highlights complex sentences, words, and assesses the reading level of your text.

Co-designing GSI Assistance Programs

Co-design is the act of creating with partners (cities, communities, counties, and organizations) as part of the program development process. Co-design helps to ensure program elements meet the broad range of partners' needs and interests.

Co-designing GSI Assistance Programs with the communities can lead to a stronger, more effective program and outcome. Consider gathering community input on program development including GSI features options and meaningful co-benefits to the community.

It is also important to pay close attention to perspectives from different community types. For example, a rural community in a jurisdiction may have a different perspective on GSI Assistance Programs, as well as different needs and values, compared to an urban community.

Partnering with community leaders can help you identify and address the values and needs of their communities. These leaders can also advocate for your program and provide a key voice in promoting and sharing your program. Ongoing engagement is also important to establishing trust and buy-in for these programs.

Co-benefits

While an agency's focus for a GSI Assistance Program may be the stormwater benefits, GSI projects can also offer a suite of co-benefits. The term co-benefits, in this instance, refers to achieving several objectives from one investment, such as benefiting both human and environmental health. Many GSI co-benefits are more meaningful to overburdened or underinvested communities than the stormwater management benefits. A few examples of GSI co-benefits include:

- **Access to nature** – in communities with inequitable access to parks and open space
- **Climate response** – reducing urban heat island effect
- **Ecological uplift** – clean water and healthy ecosystems bring nature into urban areas
- **Food access** – creation of community garden space through depaving
- **Human health** – for those most in contact with surface water, including communities experiencing homelessness
- **Property improvements** – aesthetic improvements, drainage improvements
- **Safety** – slowing down traffic (mostly for public projects in the right-of-way)
- **Sound abatement** – buffering noise from highways or airports

Co-benefits resonate differently in different communities. Using a co-design process can help identify community concerns and how GSI projects can help address those concerns. Creating programs that offer both meaningful environmental benefits and co-benefits is a win-win for jurisdictions and the communities they serve.

Gentrification

GSI projects have the potential to indirectly and unintentionally contribute to gentrification. Many of the neighborhoods most vulnerable to gentrification are ones where GSI can greatly improve the quality-of-life for residents. Installing GSI features as part of an effort to add beneficial green space in urban areas may lead to higher property values and taxes – resulting in unintended consequences that inequitably affect low-income residents. Similar unintended impacts can result when stormwater infrastructure improvements spur redevelopment.

It is important for program managers to acknowledge the risks of gentrification and to have intentionality in working with community partners to figure out how GSI projects can be best implemented to avoid gentrification.

There is no cookie cutter solution. The precise mix of programs and policies should be specific to the community and driven by community members. Ultimately, a win-win solution would encourage public investments for the purpose of public benefit while also seeking to offset, or mitigate, adverse impacts on the lowest-income participants. A co-design process is helpful to reach a win-win solution.

Jurisdictions are investigating creative ideas to solve this problem, such as limiting the increase in assessed value based on environmental improvements or providing subsidies to help cover increased taxes, but as of this writing none of these strategies are established or well-tested.

Equity metrics

Many GSI Assistance Programs focus on tracking technical success metrics, such as gallons of stormwater diverted, number of GSI features in the ground, and amount of a specific pollutants being reduced. While these are important success metrics to evaluate, there are people-related metrics that will help program managers understand if they are equitably engaging participation of their priority audience. Consider tracking metrics such as the number of people engaged through outreach or at

community meetings, survey results on why people might participate in their program, barriers that stopped a participant from implementing a project, and audience research results. It is also important to include success stories of reaching a broad audience or effectively seeing a change in residents' behaviors due to a GSI installation. These are likely the more difficult metrics to evaluate, however they tell the broader story of the multiple benefits of these GSI projects. Lastly, consider tracking installation locations and investments to ensure that projects are being installed equitably and meeting both environmental and community needs.

Figure 5: Backyard rain garden.

Program Set Up

Setting up a GSI Assistance Program requires decisions on the core elements of your program, including:

- Program goal(s)
- The type(s) of GSI will you promote
- The type of assistance will you offer
- Your priority audience
- Site eligibility requirements
- Program coordination and program implementation roles
- Budget
- How public funds will be used
- Program participant support

Each of these core elements will be discussed in further detail.

> You need to be clear with participants about the purpose of the program: improve water quality, not improve private property.

Program Goal(s)

What you hope to accomplish through your program, including addressing external requirements, will influence its setup. All but one agency interviewed operates GSI Assistance Programs voluntarily. However, GSI Assistance Programs have been used by some jurisdictions to help meet requirements for combined sewer overflow management, TMDL management related to residential runoff, and Western Washington Phase I and Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permits' Education and Outreach behavior change campaign requirements.

Types of GSI

One or more GSI features can be offered in a GSI Assistance Program. GSI features should be selected based on audience interest and needs, agency capacity, and environmental or program goals. Table 1 demonstrates the variety of GSI features offered by GSI Assistance Programs throughout Western Washington.

Table 1: Types of GSI offered in GSI Assistance Programs

Agency	Cisterns	Downspout Disconnect	Native Vegetation Conversion	Permeable Paving	Rain Barrels	Rain Garden	Tree planting	Other*
City of Bellingham & Whatcom County			X			X		X
City of Everett					X	X		
City of Kirkland	X	X	X		X	X	*	
Kitsap Conservation District	X		X	X	X	X		X
City of Lynnwood					X	X	X	
City of Olympia						X		

Agency	Cisterns	Downspout Disconnect	Native Vegetation Conversion	Permeable Paving	Rain Barrels	Rain Garden	Tree planting	Other*
Pierce Conservation District	X		X		X	X	X	X
City of Port Angeles				X		X		X
City of Puyallup				X	X	X		
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)	X					X		
City of Shoreline			X			X	*	
Snohomish Conservation District			X	X	X	X		
Snohomish County	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

**See the Program One Pagers Section for more information about other types of GSI offered by this agency*

It is also important to provide communities flexibility in participating in GSI Assistance Programs. Providing multiple types of GSI features in a program allows community members to select an option that best fits their property and their goals. Programs can also be designed to allow for multiple entries to participation, offering project options at a variety of price points, offering technical assistance for participants who choose to install a project on their own, etc. That said, because not all GSI features addresses the same problems, GSI Assistance Programs must balance the effectiveness of the features with the community's interests. For example, a basin that has combined sewer concerns may not benefit as much from a tree planting program and a watershed with excess nutrients may not be well-served by cisterns and rain gardens. It may require some education and outreach effort to build community support for the types of GSI that will be most effective toward reaching shared goals, not just those of the agency or the community alone.

Type of Assistance Offered

Most GSI Assistance Programs offer some form of technical assistance, as well as financial assistance.

> Try to remove as many financial barriers to participation as possible.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance models are designed to overcome or reduce price-related barriers that property owners may have for implementing GSI features. A GSI Assistance Program's goals and available funding will influence the extent to which financial assistance and technical assistance are provided. Balancing the needs of your audience with the intent of the funding agency/council will help define what model may best meet your program's goals.

Nearly all Western Washington programs currently offer some kind of financial assistance. All of these programs offer rain garden installation as an option, a relatively expensive GSI feature. The more costly a GSI feature is to a property owner, the greater the likelihood that financial assistance may be necessary to overcome the price barrier for its implementation. In addition to the financial assistance

provided, a few agencies (such as the Seattle/King County RainWise program) offer grants to defray or eliminate out-of-pocket costs for low-income residents.

The amount of financial assistance provided to property owners varies by agency and can also depend on the type of GSI features included in a program. Some programs offer financial assistance for a variety of GSI features (which vary in installation costs) and find that residents appreciate both financial assistance for less costly features (such as tree-planting rebates) as well as rebates for larger, more expensive projects (such as rain gardens). Some programs offer to pay a smaller portion of the overall cost of a GSI feature in order to encourage property owners to take ownership of that feature. Some agencies do not have financial caps on qualifying projects given that larger projects can have a greater impact toward meeting agency goals for managing stormwater runoff.

Three distinct models of financial assistance programs emerged from the surveys and are described below. The following terminology is used somewhat interchangeably by organizations: rebates, reimbursements, grants, mini-grants, and cost share. For the purposes of this report, the following definitions and examples are offered to distinguish between these financial assistance models. See the Program One Pagers section for details and links to respective agency websites.

- **Rebate:** A financial payment for a GSI feature, calculated based on GSI feature size, size of contributing area, percentage of total costs, or some other predetermined calculation. Rebate amounts for GSI features vary significantly across the Puget Sound programs. Rain garden rebates, for instance, range from $1.30 to $4.00 per square foot, with maximum amounts ranging from $1,000 to no cap for eligible projects.
    - *Agencies currently using this model include Cities of Kirkland, Port Angeles' permeable pavement, Seattle, Shoreline; King and Whatcom Counties*
- **Reimbursement**: A financial payment based on allowable project costs. A reimbursement only covers costs documented on receipts and/or invoices.
    - *Agencies currently using this model include Cities of Bellingham, Olympia, Everett, Port Angeles' rain garden retrofits, Puyallup's rain barrel program*
- **Cost share**: Agency provides services (design, installation) and/or pays for some of the eligible costs, up to a set dollar amount; property owner pays for the remainder of the costs or for costs of specific materials.
    - *Agencies currently using this model include Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Conservation Districts.*

Cost share can be a great way to remove barriers to participation. Kitsap Conservation District (KCD) found that a significant barrier was the actual work of putting in a rain garden. Now KCD has "Dig Days", which is a program where homeowners can sign up for a crew to come out with machinery (free of charge) to help install a rain garden. Homeowners also receive some initial rain garden plants, which eases the financial burden and the need to research which plants to get.

Deciding which financial assistance model (if any) is best for your jurisdiction depends upon several factors and will likely require input from your legal and/or finance team. Implementation of financial assistance will also vary based on how much of the cost your program opts to cover (by percent) which must be balanced with the needs of the audience and the intent of the funding agency/council.

Factors that agencies consider when determining financial assistance amounts include:

- Program goals and program costs to agency
- Available funding, overall program budget
- Needs of the audience
- Intent of the funding from your agency/council
- Size of rebate commensurate to the impact of the stormwater runoff volume managed. For example, larger rebates offered for commercial or institutional properties, and smaller rebates for residential properties.

To learn more about the financial assistance structures being used by organizations, review the Program One Pagers section.

Technical Assistance

A common barrier to GSI program participation is a lack of knowledge on how to design, install, and maintain GSI features. All Western Washington GSI Assistance Programs offer some level of technical assistance to address this barrier. See the "Do It Yourself" section for examples. Below are the most common approaches:

- **Online or print resources.** This is the most common type of technical assistance provided. It includes any educational or reference materials related to a GSI feature.
- **Workshops.** Technical assistance workshops allow participants to learn the skills needed to design, install, and maintain a GSI feature (*note: many Conservation Districts collaborate with jurisdictions to help develop and implement these workshops*). Common workshop types include:
    - Introductory workshops: focused on helping interested property owners understand which GSI feature(s) would work best on their property and if they qualify for your program.
    - Design workshops: focused helping interested property owners design a GSI feature plan specific to their property. May also include site-specific advice on how to install and maintain the GSI feature.
    - Hands-on workshops: focused on demonstrating and practicing skills needed to install and/or maintain a GSI feature.
- **Initial site visits.** Many programs require an initial site visit to determine if a property is eligible for their GSI Assistance Program. This is an excellent opportunity to help property owners consider feasible options for GSI features, discuss how to incorporate their aesthetic preference into the feature, and understand maintenance requirements.

Other technical assistance offered by some agencies includes supporting property owners during the application phase, with any potential permitting needs, and with maintenance needs.

Selecting Assistance Type(s)

Below are a few considerations to help you determine what type(s) of assistance your program should provide.

Participants are often interested in technical support from agencies and seek step-by-step guidance on how to install GSI.

- If you have limited capacity to offer a GSI Assistance Program, consider starting small. A few examples:
    - **Offer technical assistance only.** Programs can focus on offering technical assistance via provision of print/online resources, workshops, and on-site consultations. They can target either a single type of GSI feature or a few smaller GSI features.
    - **One time offering**. Provide a one-time distribution of native plants, rain barrels, or trees along with online or print resources to support proper placement, installation, and maintenance.
    - **Offer cost-share** for a portion of materials and plants, instead of rebating all the work. Your agency can help pay for some of the materials for the GSI feature while the property owner pays for the remainder of the cost.
    - **Focus on one larger GSI installation at a time,** targeting properties that can help advance key program goals (e.g., rain garden treatment for commercial parking lots in a targeted basin, rain garden clusters within a neighborhood).
- Social marketing practices and methods can help identify barriers to program participation, providing direction on which strategies will be most effective in encouraging program participation.
- An agency's legal and/or financial department will likely determine which financial assistance model is allowable. Note that rebates are usually considered taxable income, whereas reimbursements or cost-shares may not be.

Some agencies have determined that certain financial incentives are considered taxable income. Consult with your legal team when making this determination. If your agency has determined financial incentives are taxable, make sure to tell this to property owners upfront.

Priority Audience

Priority audiences can range greatly in size, depending on the size and goals of your program. For example, a priority audience can encompass an entire county or can be as small as a few high-impact lots (see Figure 6 for an example of this). Determining the priority audience for your program is an important step to prioritizing which GSI features and what types of assistance to offer. Below are a few common ways that audiences can be segmented in GSI Assistance Programs.

- **Geography:** Some GSI Assistance Programs target a specific watershed or basin due to water quality concerns. Programs led by counties or conservation districts, may specify that only properties in unincorporated areas are eligible for their program.
- **Program goals:** Program goals, such as reducing CSO overflows, reducing flows in prioritized basins, or creating more green space in underinvested neighborhoods, will influence where and for whom you develop a program.
- **Property type:** The majority of GSI Assistance Programs in Puget Sound work primarily with residential properties, even though most are open to all private properties. RainWise's Big Roofs program works with commercial or institutional properties. This program has over 60 "Big Roofs" in the portfolio, most of them places of worship, schools, or businesses. Larger commercial and institutional properties need larger-scale GSI features to mitigate runoff. Therefore, these installations likely cost more. These properties also have different needs, interests, barriers, and motivators to installing GSI features compared to single-family residential properties.

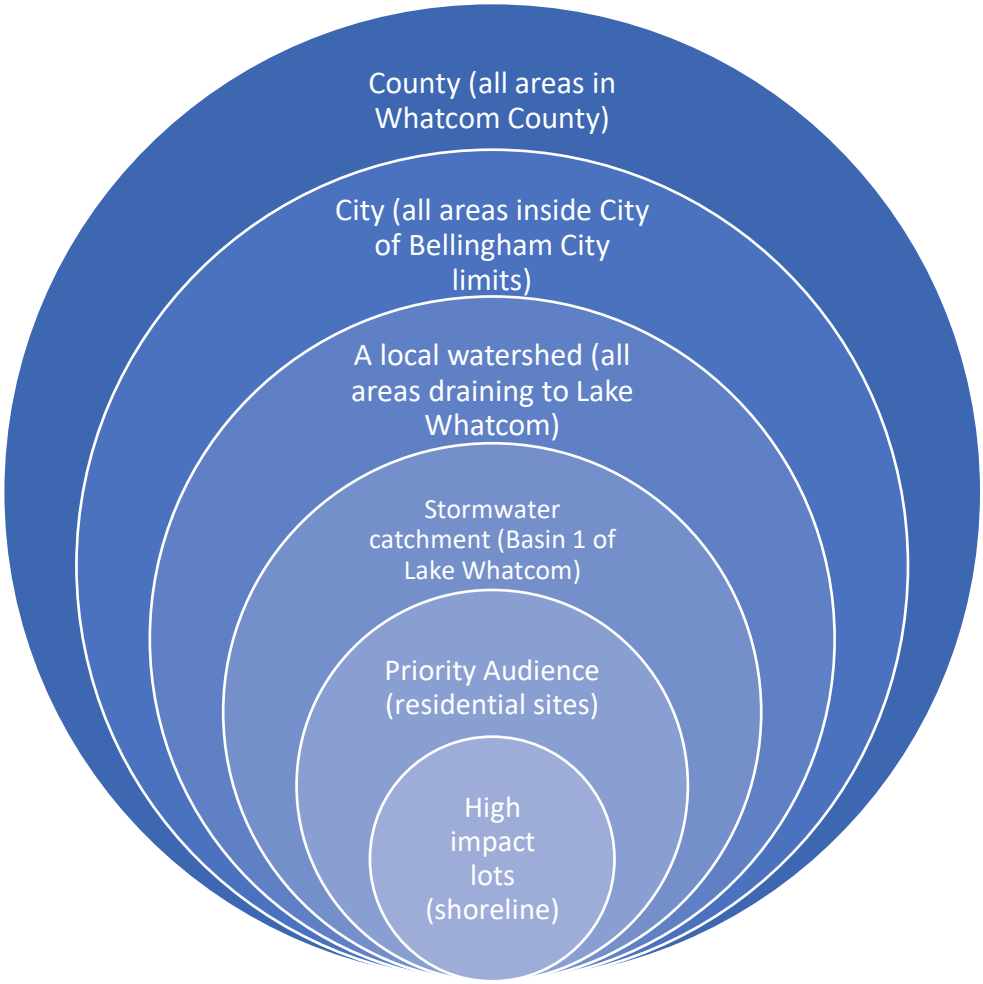

Figure 6: Example of how to select a priority audience, using City of Bellingham and Whatcom County as an example.

Audience Research

Once you have determined the priority audience for your program, it is important to conduct research into the audience's distinguishing characteristics and to understand their barriers and motivators to installing GSI features/program participation. This information can then be used to inform program structure and to prioritize which GSI features and what types of assistance are offered.

> It is important to address internal (agency) barriers as well as external barriers. Spend time figuring out where your internal audience is. Do they understand your program? Do they support it? Use social marketing practices and methods to effectively engage them with the information they need to support and strengthen your program, instead of impeding it.

- **Rural versus urban areas.** Rural communities may have different needs, interests, barriers, and motivators to installing GSI features as compared to urban communities.
- **Multicultural considerations.** Audience research should be conducted to understand your diverse audience and their specific motivators and barriers to program participation.

Refer to the Program One Pagers section for examples of priority audiences and how they may influence GSI Assistance Programs' eligibility requirements.

Establishing Site Eligibility Requirements

Establishing site eligibility requirements helps GSI Assistance Programs invest time and resources into properties that are well suited for GSI features and can help achieve program goals. Additionally, eligibility requirements can help reduce administrative time.

> It is critical to convey program requirements and expectations upfront using clear, concise language.

Site Requirements

All GSI features have specific site requirements. Ensuring that GSI features are placed correctly is critical to their function and to prevent drainage issues. Common examples of GSI features' site requirements include:

- **Rain gardens** require setbacks from a building's foundation, from utility lines, steep slopes, septic drainfields, and reserve areas, and wells. Rain gardens require a certain amount of space, which is calculated on several factors, including contributing area size and soil infiltration rate.
- **Tree plantings** requires selecting the right type of tree for the right place. Factors that limit tree planting may include sun and soil conditions, existing plants and structures, and both buried and overhead utility lines.
- **Downspout disconnect** requires a flow path of at least 50' in grassy areas and at least a 25' flow path in areas with absorbent garden beds.

Program Goals

Program goals may specify certain geographical areas, audiences, or outcomes that your program intends to support. Some examples:

- Only properties within certain watershed or CSO basins, or those within a specified proximity to a waterbody are eligible for the program.
- Only specific types of properties are eligible, such as commercial, multi-family, or single-family homes.
- Specific audiences are eligible; this is often seen when working to make programs more equitable. For instance, program may limit financial rebates to lower-income households.
- Some programs only allow properties that can install GSI features in visible locations (e.g., the front yard) to participate to support the program's goal of continued education and outreach.

Program Coordination and Implementation Roles

GSI Assistance Programs involve several activities, such as program promotion, GSI feature design review, inspections, and program evaluation. These activities may be managed by one staff member or may be delegated among a team of jurisdiction staff, partner agency staff (e.g., conservation districts, nonprofits), or contractors. Program coordination will vary by organization and is largely dependent on the administrative requirements of the program, as well as availability of financial resources and jurisdiction staff time.

Program staffing. Puget Sound GSI Assistance Programs have different strategies for staffing programs, relying mainly on internal agency staff and/or external contractors, including conservation district staff and non-profits, like Stewardship Partners and ECOSS.

Program implementation roles. Below are the major roles commonly needed to implement a GSI Assistance Program. These roles may be filled by one internal staff member, split up among multiple staff members, or a contractor.

- Program management
- Program promotion and outreach
- GSI feature design support and review
- Inspections (e.g., initial site inspections, post-construction inspections, and maintenance inspections)
- Workshop or other technical resources development
- Program evaluation
- Processing rebates, covenants and/or maintenance agreements

Partnerships

Partnerships are very common with and encouraged by many GSI Assistance Programs. They are formed to leverage expertise, augment capacity and/or provide funding options for participants. Several cities partner with their local conservation district, such as City of Lynnwood with Snohomish Conservation District and City of Bellingham with Whatcom Conservation District. Multiple agencies partner with Washington State University (WSU) Master Gardeners to provide guidance to participants in selecting site-suitable plants. Some agencies also partner with non-profits like Stewardship Partners and ECOSS

for program development and outreach support. Other agencies have brought in consultants to provide services such as conducting audience research and managing program outreach. Refer to the Program One Pagers Section to see which agencies are partnering with other groups for their GSI Assistance Programs.

Partnering with external agencies can be just as important as working with your internal teams to make sure they are advocates of your program.

Workforce and Contractors

GSI projects are often installed by contractors, by do it yourself (DIY) property owners, and sometimes by agency staff. See Table 2 for what each program allows for GSI feature installation.

Table 2: Who can install GSI features

Agency	Property Owner (DIY)	Contractor (Hired by Property Owner)	Agency Staff	Partner Agency
City of Bellingham & Whatcom County		X		
City of Everett	X	X		X
City of Kirkland	X	X		
Kitsap Conservation District	X	X	X	X
City of Lynnwood	X	X		X
City of Olympia	X	X		
Pierce Conservation District	X	X	X	
City of Port Angeles	X	X		X
City of Puyallup	X	X		
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)		X		
City of Shoreline	X	X		
Snohomish Conservation District	X	X	X	
Snohomish County	X	X		

Some agencies provide technical training for contractors that participate in their GSI Assistance Programs. Examples of these trainings include:

- **Seattle and King County, RainWise**:
  - Contractor orientations provided every year in English. In 2021, it was also provided in 3 targeted languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
  - RainWise Contractor Academy: in-depth training for contractors. Piloted in 2021 as a 12-week program with a competitive application process. There are no current plans to repeat this academy.
  - Advanced “skill-building” webinars available for contractor support
- **Everett, Let it Rain**:
  - 2-day intensive Rain Garden Design & Install for Landscapers for three years (2013, 2014 and 2015). This training stopped being offered in 2015 after attendance dropped and perhaps due to the market having been saturated.
- **Bellingham and Whatcom County, Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP)**:

- Professional certification training for HIP-specific best management practice (BMP) construction using standard details and specifications. Two-day class with required test at end and Continuing Education Unit requirements.

Having a list of pre-approved contractors for your program is helpful for program participants.

Agencies with GSI Assistance Programs were asked if they perceived there to be a shortage of qualified contractors for design, installation, and/or maintenance of GSI projects. Several said they do believe there is a shortage of qualified contractors for these GSI projects. One barrier for these contractors might be that these GSI projects are relatively low dollar value compared to other landscaping projects, so they may be of a lower priority for contractors. In addition, contractors are very busy, and it is difficult to get them out to a property for a quote and for installation.

Some agencies note on their website GSI contractors who speak other languages. For example, on the RainWise website you can find a contractor by filtering for other languages spoken, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY)

Ten of the thirteen agencies surveyed allow program participants to design and/or install GSI features. DIY can help to lower cost for program participants, which can help reduce barriers to program participation. However, because most GSI features require technical skills to design and install, offering technical support is important. Common technical assistance strategies include workshops, print or online guides, initial site inspections, and design support.

Of the agencies that allow for DIY projects, two agencies have modified rebate policies for DIY participants:

- The City of Kirkland's Yard Smart Rain Rewards program allows DIY participants to earn a rebate for up to 100% of their expenses, up to $3,000. Participants that hire a contractor can receive 75% of their expenses back, up to $3,000.
- DIY participants in Snohomish Conservation District's program are only eligible for technical assistance, not for financial assistance.

DIY projects are of strong interest to many property owners. Owners tend to maintain what they install themselves. Yet to install it, they may require a higher level of technical assistance, commonly provided by agency staff. Audience research should be conducted to determine how your community can benefit from DIY options.

Budget

There is a considerable range in budgets across Western Washington GSI Assistance Programs, from $20,000 to $550,000 a year. This range reflects program emphasis and goals, available funding, and funding source (such as time-limited grants versus collection of annual assessment fees). In addition, there are discrepancies in how agencies reported their annual budgets with some not including staff time and/or not including costs associated with contracted partners.

> Financial was a top barrier identified in the barrier survey conducted with agencies without GSI Assistance Programs.

Factors that inform a program's budget include the following list. See respective sections of this guidebook and Program One Pagers section for details and examples.

- **Cost-effectiveness to meet regulatory mandates**
    - Viable option as compared to publicly funded grey infrastructure (Cities of Everett, Seattle, and King County)
    - Determination that public infrastructure alone cannot attain goal (City of Bellingham and Whatcom County)
    - Effective way to implement NDPES Municipal Stormwater Permit-require LID practices and BMPs (City of Port Angeles, Snohomish County)
- **Established goals, milestones, and timelines.** Determined by or in coordination with regulatory compliance, funding sources, and agency/councils.
- **Start-up costs.** Program development generally incurs additional costs, some of which include:
    - Staff labor (program planning and development)
    - Audience research (tailor the program to your community)
    - Outreach programming (communications, materials, education, and outreach)
    - Training
    - Data tracking
- **Program elements.** Includes staff labor, contracts, expenses:
    - Participant recruitment and communications
    - Assistance offered (technical and/or financial)
    - Educational elements (workshops, events)
    - Training (for contractors and/or staff)
    - Evaluation
- **Internal staff versus outsourcing.** GSI Assistance Programs require a broad diversity of specialized skills. See the "Program Participant Support" section for details on how agencies have augmented their program with external support.
- **Tracking, measuring and evaluating participation.**

If you're interested in information about GSI funding opportunities, search online for "green infrastructure funding".

Use of Public Funds

Many agencies with GSI Assistance Programs are asked about how they explain whether their program is a gift of public funds. Managers of GSI Assistance Programs may need to clearly demonstrate the

public benefit to their ratepayers and demonstrate that their program does not provide funding toward anything that is solely a private benefit. Consult with your legal team to determine how to demonstrate compliance with applicable laws for the use of your taxpayers' dollars.

Here are suggestions from regional GSI Assistance Programs of how they ensured their program is not a gift of public funds, and that they were good stewards of taxpayer dollars:

- **Program demonstrated that it provides a public benefit**, as well as a benefit to the jurisdiction's stormwater infrastructure, not just benefits for the property owner. This is especially true when jurisdictions are already spending dollars to create a public benefit to the watersheds affected by your program.
- **Installations are considered part of the jurisdiction's stormwater infrastructure.** There are strict design standards and maintenance requirements to ensure the GSI features meet these criteria. A good way to ensure a durable public benefit is achieved is to develop a **maintenance agreement that requires the homeowner to return the payment if they fail to maintain the BMP**.
- One agency determined that an **environmental benefit does not increase property value, so the GSI feature is not considered a gift.**
- Because homeowners are responsible for long-term maintenance, **GSI Assistance Programs provide a better payoff to install GSI on private property than in the right of way, as future operations and maintenance dollars do not need to be set aside for these BMPs.** Keep in mind, however, that inspections may be necessary to ensure the benefit lasts for the duration of the maintenance agreement.

Again, consult your legal team to ensure your program acts as a responsible steward of public tax dollars and only provides financial assistance when tied to a specific, durable, and defensible public benefit.

Figure 7: Person mulching a rain garden with wood chips (photo credit: Erica Guttman).

Program Participant Support

Agencies provide varying levels of technical assistance support to program participants. Table 3 below shows the type of technical assistance each agency provides to program participants.

Table 3: Technical assistance provided to program participants

Table key:

J = Jurisdiction
C = Consultant
CD = Conservation District
WSU = Washington State University Master Gardeners
-- = not applicable

Agency	Primary Program Contact	Technical Assistance Workshops	Permitting Support	Design Support	Other 1:1 Technical Support
City of Bellingham and Whatcom County	CD	J	J	J, CD	J, CD
City of Everett	J	J, CD, WSU	--	J, CD, WSU	J
City of Kirkland	J	--	--	J	J

Agency	Primary Program Contact	Technical Assistance Workshops	Permitting Support	Design Support	Other 1:1 Technical Support
Kitsap Conservation District	CD	CD	CD	CD, WSU	J, CD, WSU
City of Lynnwood	CD	CD	--	CD	J, CD
City of Olympia	J	--	--	J	J
Pierce Conservation District	CD, J	CD	CD	CD	CD
City of Port Angeles	J	J, CD, WSU	J	J, CD, WSU	WSU
City of Puyallup	J	CD, WSU	--	CD	CD, WSU
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)	J	J		J	J
City of Shoreline	J	CD	--	J	J
Snohomish Conservation District		J, CD	CD	J, CD	J, CD
Snohomish County	J	J, CD, WSU	--	J, CD, WSU	J

Primary Program Contact: The main contact for the program and generally the first point of contact for participants to learn more. The primary program contact also helps participants find resources or other program contacts, as needed.

Technical Assistance Workshops: In-person or online classes that help participants learn the skills needed to design, install, and maintain GSI features.

Permitting Support: For jurisdictions that require a permit to install a GSI feature, this program contact helps participants navigate the process. Note that many programs do not offer this service because many local jurisdictions do not require permits for the GSI feature installation.

Design Support: Tailored feedback regarding the design specifications of participant's GSI feature, including siting, sizing, and (if applicable) plant selection.

Other 1:1 Technical Support: Participants may need other types of technical support. Examples of this include on-site support outside of inspections (e.g., infiltration tests, sizing GSI feature) and providing additional resources such as guidebooks.

The engineering or design work of a GSI feature is often completed by the homeowner or a contractor that the homeowner hires. Some agency staff provide technical assistance with this engineering/design work, while other agencies partner with groups like the WSU Master Gardeners or their local conservation district to help. For a few programs, the city or the partner conservation district will do the design work.

When it comes to installing the GSI features, most agencies require the homeowner to hire a contractor or provide them with the flexibility to do a DIY project. Many agencies will provide property owners with a list of contractors in their region that provide these GSI services.

Figure 8: Downspout disconnection.

Program Implementation

This chapter reviews the main elements required to implement a GSI Assistance Program. How a program is implemented varies widely across the region and tends to be a function of staff time, resources, and program goals. This chapter also explores outreach and program promotion methods and inspection activities.

Table 4 below highlights other typical program implementation activities as well as the party responsible for conducting each (jurisdiction staff, consultant, conservation district staff, and/or WSU Master Gardener). Program support activities are not captured here because they are broken out in detail in Table 3. Detailed information on inspections is provided in Table 5.

Table 4: Program implementation roles by activity

Table key:

J = Jurisdiction
C = Consultant
CD = Conservation District
WSU = Washington State University Master Gardeners
-- = not applicable

Agency	Primary Program Contact	Program Promotion (Outreach)	Contractor Training	Application and Design Review	Program Tracking	Program Evaluation	Maintenance Agreement Coordination
City of Bellingham and Whatcom County	CD	J	--	J, CD	--	--	J, CD
City of Everett	J	J	--	J	--	--	J
City of Kirkland	J	J	--	J	J	J	J
Kitsap Conservation District	CD	CD, J, WSU	J, WSU	CD, WSU	J	CD, J	CD
City of Lynnwood	CD	J	--	CD	--	--	CD
City of Olympia	J	J	--	J	J	--	--
Pierce Conservation District	CD, J	CD	--	CD	CD	CD	CD
City of Port Angeles	J	J	--	J, WSU	--	--	--
City of Puyallup	J	J	--	CD	J	J	J

Agency	Primary Program Contact	Program Promotion (Outreach)	Contractor Training	Application and Design Review	Program Tracking	Program Evaluation	Maintenance Agreement Coordination
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)	J	J, C	J, C	J, C	J	J	J
City of Shoreline	J	J	--	J	J	J	J
Snohomish Conservation District		J	--	J, CD	--	--	J
Snohomish County	J	J	--	--	J	J	--

Primary Program Contact: The main contact for the program and generally the first point of contact for participants to learn more. The primary program contact also helps participants find resources or other program contacts, as needed.

Program Promotion (Outreach): Persuasive communication activities that spread the word about the program, such as advertising, messaging, tabling, and presentations.

Contractor Training: GSI-specific education for landscape architects and contractors; contractor training is meant to increase the pool of available landscape contractors trained to design, install, and maintain GSI features.

Application and Design Review: Process of reviewing applications, including proposed designs for GSI features, and ensuring they meet program specifications.

Program Tracking: Maintaining records of basic metrics about the program and participants, such as number of installations, square feet of treated area, number of workshop participants.

Program Evaluation: Evaluating the effectiveness of the program, which could include the use of social marketing methods to evaluate and refine program.

Maintenance Agreement Coordination: Process of creating an agreement between the property owner and the program organization stating that the property owner agrees to maintain the GSI feature to certain standards for a set number of years. These agreements often allow for periodic maintenance inspections. Some programs have maintenance agreements, while others have covenants associated with the title of the property.

Program Promotion (Outreach)

A suite of promotions, or persuasive communication tactics, are used by GSI Assistance Programs across the region to reach and engage their respective priority audience(s). The level of promotional efforts varies across agencies and is often dictated by staff time, resources, and program goals. Some program's promotional strategy is designed to be relatively passive – property owners learn of the program by word-of-mouth. Other program's promotions are designed to proactively engage owners of specific

property types and/or geographic areas based on environmental, equity, or regulatory compliance goals.

Several agencies rely on partners to cross-promote their program. The following sections describe the different types of communication channels used for program promotion, the types of messengers that help promote the program, and messages jurisdictions use to engage, inspire, and involve their priority audience(s) in the program.

Tracking a program's promotions, or outreach activities, is vital to learn what is and what is not working, where adjustments are needed, and to determine return on investment. Suggestions for how to track program promotion activities are also shared below.

Communication Channel Examples

1. **Online Media**
    - Agency email listservs
    - Agency and community event calendars
    - Paid advertising, especially Facebook and Google
    - Program webpages or dedicated website
    - Social media, especially Facebook, Instagram and NextDoor

2. **Print Media**
    - Direct mail (utility bill inserts, jurisdictional newsletters, postcards, Parks & Recreational catalogue)
    - Paid advertising (newspaper, regional magazines)
    - Posters posted in public/community spaces
    - Public relations (newspaper articles, press releases)
    - Yard signs at completed installations

3. **In-person Engagement**
    - Workshops (either about the program or other workshops that cross-promote the program)
    - Door-to-door outreach (e.g., canvassing, door hangers)
    - Community events, presentations, neighborhood association meetings
    - Events – introducing program or tabling
    - Community tours of gardens
    - Contractor fairs

4. **Broadcast Media**
    - Radio

Messengers

Your agency's staff are important messengers. Consider also involving non-staff messengers to broaden and strengthen your program's promotional appeal, such as the following:

- **Participant testimonials are one of the most powerful messengers**. This includes participants sharing the program by:

    - Word of mouth
    - Before and after photos that participants share personally or allow you to share
    - Providing tours of their garden, either as part of a community event or on their own
    - Posting yard signs in front of their completed installations
    - Participating in webinars about their experience
- **Contractors can help share the program too** – they may be motivated to do so because it may lead to more clients.
- **Partner organizations can help promote the program** through all the channels noted above in "Outreach Channel Examples".

GSI Assistance Program Messaging

Agencies with GSI Assistance Programs shared the following messaging themes that resonated with their respective audience(s).

- **Environmental**
    - Doing my part to protect Puget Sound (or other local, iconic waterbody)
    - Protect salmon and wildlife
    - Control stormwater runoff – reduce flooding
    - Help with CSO problem
    - Set an example
    - Native plants are good for birds and beneficial bugs
    - Recharge groundwater
    - Create habitat
- **Beautify landscape**
    - Create a Pacific Northwest garden
    - Makeover your yard
    - Rain gardens can add color, design to a yard
    - This program is an opportunity to makeover your yard
- **Low maintenance garden**
    - Remove high-maintenance lawn
    - Native plants can be low-maintenance
    - Rain gardens can be a great alternative to a lawn
    - Rain gardens are meant for the Pacific Northwest
- **Solve drainage issues**
    - GSI can help solve some chronic drainage issues in yard
- **Financial**
    - Rebate can help cover all or much of the GSI installation
    - Rebates are first-come, first-served

Each of these messages resonated with participants of the respective GSI Assistance Program's participants. Finding the messages that resonates with your specific audience will require some level of audience research – such as a survey, focus group(s), community group listening sessions – yet will increase audience engagement.

Providing in-language resources is important for equity and inclusion of non-English speaking communities within your agency's priority audience. Examples of translated materials can be found on STORM's Resource Reservoir (http://www.pugetsoundstormgroup.org/).

Tracking Outreach and Program Promotion

Most jurisdictions track and record their outreach and program promotion in a spreadsheet or database. Different methods for tracking and/or evaluating outreach and program promotion include:

- Mapping deployed promotional materials and comparing to interest response
- Social media and website metrics
- Survey how people heard of program
- Track number of interested persons
- Track types of promotional tactics and their audience reach (e.g., social media, newsletter, utility insert, paid advertising, etc.)
- Workshop/event attendance
- Workshop/event registration

Inspections and Maintenance

GSI Assistance Programs often include one or more inspections, each conducted for a different purpose. While agencies sometimes refer to these inspections by different names, we define four types of inspections that agencies reported. Table 5 below shows which inspection each GSI Assistance Program uses and who is responsible for conducting the inspections.

Table 5: Inspections offered by each agency

Table key:
J = Jurisdiction
C = Consultant
CD = Conservation District
-- = not applicable

Agency	Pre-inspection	Mid-construction inspection	Post-construction inspection	Maintenance inspections
City of Bellingham & Whatcom County	CD	J, CD	J	J
City of Everett	J	J	J	J
City of Kirkland	J	--	J	J
Kitsap Conservation District	CD	CD	CD	CD
City of Lynnwood	CD	--	--	J, CD
City of Olympia	J	J	J	--
Pierce Conservation District	CD	--	CD	--
City of Port Angeles	J	--	J	--
City of Puyallup	J, CD	J	J	J
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)	J, C	J	J, C	J
City of Shoreline	J	J	J	J

Agency	Pre-inspection	Mid-construction inspection	Post-construction inspection	Maintenance inspections
Snohomish Conservation District	J, CD	J, CD	J, CD	CD
Snohomish County	J	--	--	--

Pre-inspection: Program staff help interested program participants determine what GSI features are feasible on their property, where to place features, and share considerations on how to design and install. Some programs refer to pre-inspections as "consultations" where the focus of the visit is providing guidance on GSI installation. Other programs consider these visits formal inspections and keep records of portions of the property that are approved for program specific GSI features.

Mid-construction inspection: After the excavation and placement of structural pieces of GSI features (e.g., inlets, cistern tank, etc.), program staff inspect earthwork to ensure engineering standards are met. This type of inspection takes place for GSI features that, upon completion, will contain buried elements. This helps ensure that the ground was excavated to appropriate depth, scarified if needed, and that structural pieces were connected appropriately. Some programs offer this inspection only by request or for more technical GSI installations, rather than for all sites.

Post-construction inspection: Once the GSI feature is complete/installed, program staff inspect the feature to ensure it reflects the proposed design and meets all required specifications. Often, maintenance practices or obligations are reviewed with property owner during this visit. Some programs consider this visit a "consultation," helping the property owner ensure the GSI feature was installed correctly. Other programs consider this a formal inspection and verify that the GSI feature meets program standards.

Maintenance inspections: Some programs require that GSI installations maintain specific standards for a set number of years. To ensure this, some programs conduct maintenance inspections on a regular basis. Some programs consider these "consultations" which aim to provide guidance on maintaining the GSI feature and helping troubleshoot issues. Other programs consider these "inspections" and, in some cases, have maintenance agreements or covenants in place to ensure compliance with maintenance standards.

Figure 9: Person inspecting the levelness of a rain garden (photo credit: Erica Guttman).

Maintenance is usually required for 5-10 years after the installation of the GSI feature. Some agencies conduct inspections of the GSI features installed in their jurisdictions through their GSI Assistance Programs. Many agencies require property owners to sign a maintenance agreement that states the property owner will maintain the GSI feature on their property.

Table 6: Maintenance requirements

Table key:

-- = not applicable

Agency	Is Maintenance Required?	Who is the responsible Party?	How long is maintenance required?	Are maintenance inspections performed?	Agreement to ensure access and maintenance?
City of Bellingham & Whatcom County	Yes	Property owner responsible for minor maintenance. Extensive maintenance may be eligible for additional financial and technical assistance.	In the City of Bellingham, permanently, runs with land. In Whatcom County, maintenance requirements expire upon sale of property	Yes	Maintenance agreement

Agency	Is Maintenance Required?	Who is the responsible Party?	How long is maintenance required?	Are maintenance inspections performed?	Agreement to ensure access and maintenance?
City of Everett	Yes	Property owner	10 years	Yes	Maintenance agreement tied to house deed
City of Kirkland	Yes	Property owner	5 years	Yes	Maintenance agreement
Kitsap Conservation District	Yes	Property owner	5 years	Yes	Cooperative agreement; Cost Share Assistance agreement*
City of Lynnwood	No	Property Owner	SCD provides 3 years of maintenance, if needed/by request	By request	--
City of Olympia	Yes	Property owner	--	No	No
Pierce Conservation District (PCD)	No	Private properties: Property owner Public properties: PCD	For public properties, PCD provides 3 years of maintenance.	No	--
City of Port Angeles	No	Property Owner	--	No	No
City of Puyallup	Yes	Property owner	Permanently, the maintenance requirement runs with the land	Yes	Yes
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)	Yes	Property owner	Residential properties: 5 years Big Roof Program: 10 years	Yes	Contract includes landowner agreement to maintain
City of Shoreline	Yes	Property owner	10 years	Yes	Maintenance covenant tied to property title (legally binding)
Snohomish Conservation District	No	Property owner/designee	--	Sometimes	No
Snohomish County	No	Property owner	--	No	--

*Kitsap Conservation District's (KCD) Cooperative agreement is between landowner and KCD: KCD agrees to provide technical and financial assistance and the landowner agrees to maintain the practice(s) and to notify them if they intent to sell or lease the property. The Cost Share agreement is

specific to the practice(s), justifies the reasons why, further defines the terms and is signed before and after the practice is completed.

Make sure your maintenance agreement(s) and requirements are a good fit for the goals and objectives of your program, a good fit for program participants, and ensure that regular maintenance of the GSI features occurs to maintain function.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Some agencies have compiled FAQ sheets about their GSI Assistance Program for program participants, most of which can be found on their program's website (see the Program One Pagers section for links to these webpages). Many agencies, however, do not have an FAQ document, or have an outdated one. Below are questions commonly asked by program participants:

- What is the program?
- What does the program provide?
- How much are reimbursements?
- Am I eligible for this program?
- What GSI features are offered?
- Is DIY an option?
- How much will this cost me?
- What is the application process?
- Can I receive a rebate for an existing or partially constructed rain garden or native landscaping bed?
- Where can I find qualified contractors?
- How do I know if a plant is "native"?
- Is there a deadline/time limit to installing a project?

GSI Assistance Program staff should be ready to answer these questions for their interested program participants.

Figure 10: Community members selecting plants for a rain garden (photo credit: David Hymel).

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is essential to measuring the impact of your program. It also enables you to know what did and did not work in your program, and why. If the evaluation intends to measure changes in behavior, it is important to incorporate baseline evaluation into the overall evaluation plan.

Determine your evaluation methods and metrics at the beginning of your program's set up. These should align with the program's objectives and will help staff determine if the program has met its performance measures.

Many agencies with GSI Assistance Programs have hired consulting firms to guide them in the development of a program evaluation plan and/or to conduct, analyze, and report on evaluation results.

Table 7 lists evaluation methods that agencies with GSI Assistance Programs use to track their programs.

Table 7: Program evaluation methods

Agency	General Program Tracking	Environmental Impact	Behavior Change	Equity	Program Promotion	Other
City of Bellingham & Whatcom County	X	X	X		X	
City of Everett	X	X				
City of Kirkland	X	X	X		X	
Kitsap Conservation District	X	X			X	
City of Lynnwood	X				X	
City of Olympia	X			X	X	
Pierce Conservation District	X	X		X		
City of Port Angeles	X	X				
City of Puyallup	X	X				
City of Seattle & King County (RainWise)	X	X	X	X	X	Workforce development
City of Shoreline	X	X	X	X	X	
Snohomish Conservation District		X				Social impact
Snohomish County	X	X	X		X	

General Program Tracking

- Number of GSI workshop/event attendees
- Number of program participants
- Number of project installations

Environmental Impact

- Size of contributing area

- Size of native landscape conversion or impervious area treated/removed
- Volume of stormwater managed

Behavior Change

- Benefit/barrier audience research (surveys, focus groups, interviews)
- Behavior change tracking (conduct pre- and post-participation evaluation; control group encouraged)
- Participant feedback (event/workshop/participation survey)

Equity

- Comparison of jurisdiction demographics to program participant demographics
- Number of minority- or women-owned contractors
- Number of new low-income households or marginalized communities

Program Promotion

- Communication channel reach and frequency
- Usage analytics (website visits, social media impressions)
- Participant response rate(s) (how they heard about the program)

Other

- Workforce development - number of contractors trained
- Social impact – number of people that interact with the rain garden or other GSI facility and associated interpretive signage

Figure 11: Front yard rain garden (photo credit: David Hymel).

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for managers, planners, and other agency staff looking to update or create a GSI Assistance Program.

Program Design

- **Consider starting small**. This can include offering just technical assistance, providing a one-time offer (like a rain barrel distribution), or focusing on just one GSI installation at a time.
- **Identify your primary audience and intentionally solicit their input** on program development, including GSI feature options and meaningful co-benefits to the community.
- **Pay close attention to perspectives from different segments of your target audience**. For example, rural, suburban, and urban communities within a jurisdiction may each have different perspectives on GSI Assistance Programs.
- **Create programs that offer meaningful GSI co-benefits,** like creating greenspace in highly urbanized areas, planting trees in urban heat islands, or supporting native birds and pollinators in public parks. This is a win-win for agencies and the communities the programs serve.
- **Determine your evaluation methods and metrics at the beginning of your program's set up.** These need to align with the program's objectives and will help determine whether the program has met its performance measures.

Listening to Learn: Engaging Underinvested Communities

- **Partner with community leaders to help identify and address the values and needs of their communities**. Build relationships at the speed of trust.
- **Provide in-language resources for equity and inclusion of non-English speaking communities within your agency's priority audience** (as needed).
- **Implement strategies that decrease total project costs and reduce upfront costs for participants**. This can help increase participation for lower-income households.
- **Consider tracking installation locations and investments to ensure that projects are being installed equitably** and meeting both environmental and community needs.

Communication and Outreach

- **Use non-technical, plain language, and familiar terms in outreach materials**. Social marketing practices and methods can help identify barriers to program participation, providing direction on which strategies will be most effective in encouraging program participation.
- **Utilize your agency's staff as important messengers. Consider also involving non-staff messengers, such as Conservation District staff, non-profit staff, and community members, to broaden and strengthen your program's promotional appeal**.
- **Track a program's promotions and outreach activities along with their response** to learn what is working, what is not working, where adjustments may be needed, and to determine return on investment.
- **Find the messages that resonate with your specific audience**. This will likely require some level of audience research – such as a survey, focus group(s), and/or community group listening sessions – and will increase audience engagement.

Program Implementation

- **Select GSI features based on audience interest and needs, agency capacity and budget, and environmental or program goals**. Consider building ongoing support and participant communication into your program to encourage regular preventive maintenance activities.
- **Explore opportunities for partnerships within GSI Assistance Programs.** Partnerships with Conservation Districts, local non-profits, and consultants are very common and encouraged by many GSI Assistance Programs. They are formed to leverage expertise, augment capacity, and/or provide funding options for participants.
- **Consult your legal team to ensure your program acts as a responsible steward of public funds** and only provides financial assistance when tied to a specific, durable, and defensible public benefit.
- **Ensure your maintenance agreement(s) and requirements are a good fit** for the goals and objectives of your program, a good fit for program participants, and ensure that regular maintenance of the GSI features occurs to preserve function.

Program One Pagers

City of Bellingham: Homeowner Incentive Program

www.lakewhatcomHIP.org

Program started in **2011**

Program is funded by **Lake Whatcom Watershed Protection fee, Storm and Surface Water Utility Fund**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **2 FTE**

Why was the program created?

Stormwater entering Lake Whatcom carries excess phosphorus from developed land. The HIP was developed to support projects that help meet the City's TMDL requirement to reduce loading by 87%

GSI features included

- Native landscaping
- Infiltration trenches
- Media treatment
- Lake Whatcom rain gardens
- Dispersion

Type of assistance offered

- Technical: design, permitting, and construction assistance.
- Financial: Reimbursement of $1.30/square foot of site area improved

Eligible properties

818 single-family properties in the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Maintenance requirements

Maintenance agreement that requires simple maintenance and self-inspection. If conditions are met, homeowner qualifies for additional reimbursement when major maintenance is required (long-term).

Partnerships?

Whatcom Conservation District provides on-site assistance and coordination with the city.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Medium: 10-50	Medium: 10-50	Up to $1.1M in projects

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

City of Everett: Let It Rain

everettwa.gov/raingardens, everettwa.gov/rainbarrels

Program started in **2015**

Program is funded with **stormwater fees**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.5 FTE**

Why was the program created?

The program started with homeowners in the combined areas of Everett to alleviate pressure on the combined sewer systems. The program is now offered city-wide.

GSI features included

- Rain gardens
- Rain barrels

Type of assistance offered

- Technical: site assessments and rain garden design workshops
- Financial: up to a $2,500 receipt-based rebate to homeowners for an approved rain garden.
- Sales: The City of Everett has multiple outdoor sales where barrels are sold at cost.
- Workshops: Residents can attend a Make-it, Take-it workshop to make their own rain barrels.

Eligible properties

Rain gardens: Any privately owned home within the Everett city limits can apply.
Rain barrels: Any City of Everett resident can purchase or attend a workshop.

Maintenance requirements

All homeowners sign and notarize a maintenance agreement which is then tied to the deed of the house for the life of the agreement. The property owner is responsible to maintain the rain garden.

Partnerships

The City of Everett partners with Snohomish Conservation District and Washington State University Extension to offer technical assistance to property owners throughout the rain garden process.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Small: 0-50	Medium: 10-50	20 rebates available annually

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

GSI Mini Grants

https://www.12000raingardens.org/gsi-mini-grants/

Program started in **2013**

Program is funded **by the King County Wastewater Treatment Division WaterWorks program**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **2.5 FTE** (combined with RainWise Access Grants)

Why was the program created?

Investing in GSI can be time consuming and costly, creating a barrier for participants. This program intends to give people the connections, tools, resources and knowledge to install GSI.

GSI features included

- Rain gardens
- Depave projects
- Cisterns
- Green roofs
- Grattix

Type of assistance offered

- Up to $1,500 for landowners within the King County Wastewater Treatment Division service area
- Up to $4,500 may be provided to income-limited landowners
- Larger grants may be available to projects located in the Lower Duwamish Source Control Area
- Not every project will be funded equally, grant amounts correlate to the projects projected environmental and community benefits

Eligible properties

Landowners within the King County Wastewater Treatment Division service area that at are not eligible for other incentive programs. Do-it-yourself projects are eligible.

Maintenance requirements

Landowner agrees to maintain the feature for a minimum of five years. Additional maintenance requirements specified in the application form.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100+ (through various outreach channels)	Medium: 10-50 projects	$125,000 in grant capital available at this time (combined with RainWise Access Grants)

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Kirkland: Yard Smart Rain Rewards

www.Kirklandwa.gov/YardSmart

Program started in **2014 (pilot)**

Program is funded with **grants and utility fund**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.5 FTE**

Why was the program created?

Provide technical assistance and rebates to encourage Kirkland landowners to implement GSI retrofits and manage stormwater flows on their property.

GSI features included

- Rain gardens
- Native landscaping
- Cisterns
- Downspout disconnection

Type of assistance offered

- $50 per downspout, for downspout disconnection.
- $150 per tree, up to $500 per property

For all other projects:

- For single-family homes, 75% of project costs up to $3,000 for work done by contractors, or 100% of project costs up to $3,000 for Do-It-Yourself (DIY) projects.
- For multi-family homes & non-residential properties (commercial, industrial, non-profit, churches, etc.), we will cover 75% of project costs up to $6,000.

Eligible properties

Properties connected the City of Kirkland stormwater drainage system.

Maintenance requirements

5-year maintenance agreement.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 +	Medium: 10-50	Varies, based on funding available

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Kitsap Conservation District: Rain Gardens and More Program

https://kitsapcd.org/programs/raingarden-lid

Program started in ***2010***

Program is funded with: **Inter-local agreements, grants**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **3 FTE**

Why was the program created?

To help private landowners complete small GSI projects in unincorporated Kitsap County.

GSI features included

- Rain gardens
- Rain barrels/Cisterns
- Permeable pavement
- Native plantings
- Soakage trenches

Type of assistance offered (financial and/or technical)

- Technical: With Dig Days, KCD supplies installation and materials.
- Financial: Up to $1,500 cost share rebate to landowner (or budget if KCD does the installation)

Eligible properties

Private properties within unincorporated Kitsap County and other jurisdictions depending on grant.

Maintenance requirements

The landowner is responsible for maintaining the GSI feature for a period of 5 years. KCD does a yearly inspection of the GSI feature.

Partnerships

Kitsap County, Kitsap Health District, Washington State University, Kitsap Public Utility District

Unique program elements

To be able to work directly with private landowners, businesses, and non-profit organizations

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 +	Large: 50+	50 - 60

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

City of Lynnwood: Rain Garden Program

https://www.lynnwoodwa.gov/Government/Departments/Public-Works/Environmental-and-Surface-Water-Education-and-Outreach/Rain-Gardens

Program started in **2017**
Program is funded with **surface water utility fees**
Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.25 FTE**

Why was the program created?

To complete GSI projects in the Perrinville watershed, which includes parts of Lynnwood. The City of Lynnwood then moved forward to fund and manage their own rain garden program.

GSI features offered

- Rain gardens
- Vegetable gardens
- De-paves
- Rain catchment/rain barrels, etc.

Type of assistance offered (financial and/or technical)

- Technical: rain garden workshops, expertise, resources
- Financial: subsidizes community rain garden cost; low cost to property owners

Eligible properties

All properties within the City of Lynnwood

Maintenance requirements

Snohomish Conservation District helps to maintain new rain gardens for the first few years. After this grace period, maintenance is the responsibility of the property.

Partnerships

Snohomish Conservation District

Unique program elements (i.e. equity, target specific environmental benefits)

Social and environmental need are taken into consideration when planning community GSI projects.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 +	Small: 0-10	Ability to fund up to 10 rain gardens per year.

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

City of Olympia: Rain Garden Program

www.olympiawa.gov/services/water_resources/storm___surface_water/pollution_prevention/rain_gardens.php

Program started in **2012**

Program is funded with **utility fees**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.10 FTE**

Why was the program created?

Older residential neighborhoods in Olympia are lacking stormwater management facilities (flow control and treatment). These neighborhoods are in proximity to Budd Inlet. The program provides an incentive to encourage property owners to absorb and filter stormwater on their property.

GSI features included

- Rain gardens

Type of assistance offered

- $400 reimbursement for plants and/or compost used for the construction of the rain garden.

Eligible properties

The Rain Garden Incentive Program is targeted for residential properties, but commercial, school, or religious-use properties may also be considered for participation in the program. The incentive is not available for permitted rain gardens associated with new construction.

Maintenance requirements

The property owner is responsible for maintaining the rain garden as long as they own the property.

Unique program elements

Considerations include an equity index and a service equity analysis of programs. Equity considerations will be part of the focus and selection criteria as the program is developed.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Small: 0-50	Small: 0-10	10 projects

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Pierce Conservation District: Cost Share Program

https://piercecd.org/197/Water-Quality

Program started in **2014**

Program is funded with **Natural Resource Property Tax Rates, Grants, Contracts**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **2 FTE**

Why was the program created?

Jurisdictional partners requested our programming to work with private property owners in on site stormwater management. These projects compliment the stormwater work on public lands.

GSI features included

- Rain gardens
- De-pave
- Tree planting
- Rain tanks
- Urban habitat

Type of assistance offered

- Technical: PCD designs projects for homeowner to fund and install
- Financial: PCD designs and funds project up to $4,000 if awarded a GSI Mini-Grant

Eligible properties

Primarily residential properties, but also public demonstration areas such as parks and churches.

Maintenance requirements

Property owner must maintain the GSI feature.

Partnerships?

Local jurisdictions have various incentives if a homeowner works with PCD in designing and installing a GSI project. Master Gardeners assist with plant design services with the homeowner.

Unique program elements

PCD provides virtual technical assistance to any property in Pierce County and hands-on technical assistance to properties in our GSI Priority Area. PCD provides financial assistance with preference to projects in historically disinvested in areas within the GSI Priority Area.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 +	Medium: 10-50	50+

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Port Angeles: Rain Garden Rebates

https://www.cityofpa.us/263/Stormwater-Incentives

Program started in **2009**

Program is funded with **Stormwater Utility Rates**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.10 FTE**

Why was the program created?

To provide financial assistance to properties electively disconnecting their stormwater from the City's combined sewer system along with incentivizing Low Impact Development (LID).

GSI features included

- Rain gardens,
- Permeable pavement
- Class A compost for soil amendment

Type of assistance offered

- Technical guidance to interested property owners
- Rain garden and permeable pavement rebates – up to $1000 reimbursement for materials.
- Garden Glory compost voucher for up to 10 cubic yards of material.

Eligible properties

Any privately owned property within the City of Port Angeles. Limits apply to new or redevelopment projects.

Maintenance requirements

Guidance and resources provided to the applicant; however, a formal agreement is not required.

Partnerships?

The Clallam Conservation District has provided education about rain gardens and will occasionally provide technical assistance. The Washington State University WSU Master Gardeners help with preparing applications.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Small: 0-50	Small: 0-10	Roughly 25 per year

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

City of Puyallup: Rain Garden Program

https://www.cityofpuyallup.org/192/Puyallup-Rain-Gardens

Program started in **2009**

Program is funded with **Grants and Utility fees**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.1 FTE**

Why was the program created?

To engage the public, teach them about GSI, the importance of getting water back into the ground and to reduce drainage problems in the valley. This program allows the City of Puyallup to leverage private property and dollars to reduce the amount of flow to the City's storm system.

GSI features offered

Rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable paving

Type of assistance offered (financial and/or technical)

- Technical assistance provided, but program participants are generally routed to the Pierce Conservation District for technical questions.
- Financial:
  - Rain gardens: up to $1,000
  - Permeable pavement (only replaced, not new): 50% of total costs, up to $7,500
  - Rain barrel: up to $125

Eligible properties

Single family residential homes within the City of Puyallup.

Maintenance requirements

The homeowner is required to maintain the GSI feature.

Partnerships:

Pierce Conservation District who provides design and scoping for the homeowner. After construction, in partnership with the PCD, the City provides follow up education, outreach, assistance, and some crew time.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Small: 0-50	Small: 0-10	Varies

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

King County Stormwater Services: RainScapes

https://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/water-and-land/stormwater/green-stormwater-infrastructure-incentive-program.aspx

Program started in **2018**

Program is funded with **Surface Water Management fees from unincorporated King County residents**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **2.0 FTE**

Why was the program created?

To incentivize private property owners in unincorporated King County to manage stormwater on-site. Attempting to retrofit residential and commercial properties that have little to no stormwater controls on-site.

GSI features included

- Rain Gardens
- Cisterns
- Depaving
- Tree planting

Type of assistance offered

- Private Properties: Construction costs are 100% covered by King County during the program's current pilot phase. Maintenance costs are also 100% covered for the first year after construction is completed.
- Commercial properties: Owners may receive a discount on Surface Water Management fees included in property taxes, based on the amount of rainwater controlled by GSI on the property.

Eligible properties

Properties within unincorporated King County. An engineering evaluation will determine if a property is a good fit for GSI.

Maintenance requirements

King County will provide maintenance for the first year, then it is the property owner's responsibility.

Partnerships?

Snohomish Conservation District partnered on a grant to improve efficiencies within RainScapes and offer green job training. DIRT Corps partners on green job opportunity creation. 4Culture is working on art installations and beautification of GSI designs.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 +	Small: 1-50	Up to $250K in projects per biennium

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

RainWise Access Grants

https://www.12000raingardens.org/rainwise-access-grant/

Program started in **2014**

Program is funded **by the King County Wastewater Treatment Division WaterWorks program**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **2.5 FTE** (combine with GSI Mini Grants)

Why was the program created?

Even relatively small ($1,000 or less) out of pocket costs for RainWise projects pose a barrier to many would-be participants, particularly low-income and underserved communities.

GSI features included

- Rain garden
- Cistern

Type of assistance offered

- Up to an additional $1,000 for RainWise eligible homeowners and non-profit community organizations (including religious groups) to bridge the gap between the RainWise rebate amount and actual project costs for income limited and underserved communities.

Eligible properties

Landowners eligible for RainWise (located within priority combined sewer overflow areas).

Maintenance requirements

Landowner agrees to maintain the feature for a minimum of five years, in accordance with RainWise maintenance requirements.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Small: 0-50 people (through various outreach channels)	Small: 0-10 projects	$125,000 in grant capital available at this time (combined with GSI Mini Grants)

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

City of Seattle and King County Wastewater Treatment Division: RainWise

https://700milliongallons.org/rainwise/

Program started in **2010**

Program is funded with **Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) capital improvement program funds and King County Wastewater Treatment Division ratepayer fees**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **City of Seattle: 3.0 FTE, King County: 3.0 FTE**

Why was the program created?

RainWise was created as an incentive for private property owners in neighborhoods that are part of the combined sewer system to manage the rain that falls on their property by installing small-scale storm water facilities (rain gardens and cisterns) on their properties.

GSI features included

- Rain Gardens
- Cisterns

Type of assistance offered

- Financial: The rebate is currently up to $4.00 per square foot of rooftop runoff controlled.
- The program provides training to contractors who can assist participants.

Eligible properties

Properties within identified priority combined sewer overflow areas.

Maintenance requirements

Property owners are responsible for maintenance. Maintenance is required for 5 years on residential properties and 10 years for non-residential installations that are over 5,000 square feet of roof area.

Partnerships?

Stewardship Partners administers the RainWise Access Grant and Green Stormwater Mini Grant Programs to help increase equity. ECOSS provides multicultural outreach to potential clients and contractors. Outreach Grants for non-profit and small MWBE firms to provide program outreach.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 +	Large: 50+	Up to $1.1M in projects

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

City of Shoreline: Soak It Up Rain Garden and Native Landscaping Rebate Program

www.shorelinewa.gov/soakitup

Program started in **2014**

Program is funded with **Surface Water Management Fees**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.25 - 0.3 FTE**

Why was the program created?

To encourage and motivate Shoreline residents and/or businesses to take action on private property to improve water quality, reduce flow into the City's stormwater system, and make a positive impact on the environment and Puget Sound.

GSI features included

- Rain Gardens
- Native Landscaping Conversion

Type of assistance offered

- Financial rebate: $2.50/sq ft; minimum 400 sq feet, maximum 800 sq ft ($1,000-$2,000 rebate)
- Technical assistance workshops supporting cost estimation, siting, design, construction, planting, and maintenance

Eligible properties

All private properties in Shoreline that meet site criteria identified in Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington

Maintenance requirements

Program participants required to sign 10-year maintenance covenant**.** City conducts required maintenance inspections every 2 years

Unique program elements

- Technical assistance for downspout disconnection
- Partnership with other City of Shoreline departments to offer a "Trees for Shoreline" pilot program; property owners attend workshop and receive a free 5-gallon tree to plant, along with mulch and a watering bag.

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Medium: 50-100	Small: 0-10	Up to $30,000; ~15

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Snohomish Conservation District: Urban Stormwater Program

https://snohomishcd.org/sound-homes

Program started in **2011**

Program is funded with **Grants and Snohomish County Utility Rates**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **4 FTE**

Why was the program created?

- Reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants in stormwater
- Increase infiltration for groundwater recharge
- Raise awareness of stormwater issues and impacts
- Protect native vegetation and soils
- Support state and regional fish and habitat goals
- Improve urban base flows
- Reduce scouring in streams

GSI features included

- Rain gardens
- De-paves
- Bioswales
- Rainwater Catchment
- Detention/retention pond support

Type of assistance offered

- Technical assistance to design and install GSI features. Workshops provided.
- Cost share: homeowner pays only for the cost of plants.

Eligible properties

Depends on the funding source, but most properties, including residential and commercial in Snohomish County

Maintenance requirements

The homeowner is required to maintain the GSI feature.

Partnerships?

SCD partners with agencies, municipalities, organizations and individual landowners

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Medium: 50-100	Medium: 10-50	10-50 depending on funding

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Snohomish County: RainScaping

www.RainScaping.info

Program started in **2018 (pilot)**; **full program launch 2022**

Program is funded with **Utility Fees**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.75 FTE**

Why was the program created?

RainScaping was created as a technical assistance program to help households implement stormwater retrofits designed to reduce runoff. The campaign is implemented by the following County programs: NPDES Residential Education/Outreach (LID practices and BMP behavior change campaign), LakeWise (phosphorus reduction); Drainage Investigation (solve drainage issues).

GSI features offered

- berms and trench drains
- compost-amended soils
- drainage outlet protection
- drip-line protection
- gutters and downspouts
- landscaping wet areas
- lawn alternatives
- mulch
- permeable paving options
- rain gardens
- rainwater collection systems (barrels and cisterns)
- retaining walls and terraces
- underground infiltration systems

Type of assistance offered (financial and/or technical)

Technical assistance: step-by-step guides, site visits, workshops, events, local resources, videos

Eligible properties

Single family residential properties built without stormwater management systems and located in unincorporated Snohomish County

Maintenance requirements

Homeowner responsible to finance, install and maintain.

Partnerships?

Washington State University Snohomish County Master Gardeners and Snohomish Conservation District

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Large: 100 + (per 2018 pilot)	Medium: 10-50 (projected)	N/A

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Whatcom County: Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP)

https://www.lakewhatcomhip.org/county/

Program started in **2021 (pilot in partnership with City of Bellingham from 2011-2020)**

Program is funded with **Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District tax and Lake Whatcom Stormwater Utility fee**

Number of full-time employees (in terms of staff time): **0.8 - 1.0 FTE**

Why was the program created?

HIP's primary goal is to reduce phosphorus runoff into Lake Whatcom from older developed residential properties. HIP also engages watershed residents to promote watershed stewardship as a social norm.

GSI features included

- Native landscaping
- Infiltration trenches
- Media Filter Drains
- Lake Whatcom rain gardens
- Dispersion

Type of assistance offered

- Technical: design, permitting, and construction assistance.
- Financial: Reimbursement of $1.30/square foot of site area improved up to $8,000.

Eligible properties

Any parcel in the unincorporated Lake Whatcom watershed that does not treat stormwater runoff to current code standards.

Maintenance requirements

Notarized maintenance agreement with a specific schedule of maintenance activities outlined for each BMP. Annual self-inspection report.

Partnerships

Whatcom Conservation District provides on-site assistance and coordination with the County

Annual Average Number of Interested Participants	Annual Average Number of GSI Installations	Total Annual Number of GSI Project the Agency can Offer
Medium: 50-100	Medium: 10-50	10-20

The information provided here is accurate as of 2022.

Appendix A:
GSI Assistance Program Survey Responses

GSI Assistance Program Survey Responses

Definitions

GSI: green stormwater infrastructure (i.e. low impact development)
program: GSI incentive/assistance program

**If you participated in King County's 2020 survey, then we already have your answer for this question. Let us know if you would like to edit the response you already provided.*

***If you participated in Snohomish County's 2018 survey, then we already have your answer for this question. Let us know if you would like to edit the response you already provided.*

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Program Set Up and Management

- ***Was the program set up voluntarily or was it a regulatory requirement?**
  - Lynnwood: Voluntary throughout entire coverage area, focus on residential.
  - Shoreline: voluntary
  - SCD: Voluntary
  - Kitsap CD: Voluntarily
  - Port Angeles: I believe voluntarily, however, I'm not positive and have reached out to see if anyone in my Dept. can confirm.
- ***Is your program a rebate, cost share, or other type of program?**
  - Lynnwood: Cost share. Homeowners pay only for plants.
  - Kitsap CD: Rebate, Cost Share and Technical assistance
  - Port Angeles: Rebate
  - ***How much money does your program reimburse or provide to property owners?**
    - Lynnwood: Conservation district pays for all the plants and then invoice homeowners. City does not exchange money.
    - Shoreline: Rebate program, provides $1,000 to $2,000 depending on contributing area for rain gardens or size of native vegetation landscaping garden.
    - SCD: cost share; Usually provide labor and they provide materials
    - Kitsap CD: Up to $1,000 cost share rebate to landowner (or budget if KCD does the installation).
    - Port Angeles: In previous years $50K was budgeted to cover all 3 aspects of the program, however, in the 2021 budget, it will be reduced to $20K due to consistent underutilization.
- ***What types of GSI does your program include?**
  - Lynnwood: Urban agriculture and rain barrels too.
  - Shoreline:
    - 1. Rain Gardens that collect water from homeowners' property (e.g., roof, driveway)
    - 2. Native vegetation landscaping: tilled and amended soils and native plantings (50% native plants required)
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    - SCD: Raingardens, depaves, bioswales, catchment, and pond support
    - Kitsap CD: Rain gardens, permeable paving, cisterns, soakage trenches, landscape modification w. native plants, rain barrels
    - Port Angeles: Rain garden rebate for new and retrofit projects – up to $1000 reimbursement for materials. Permeable pavement rebate for new and retrofit projects – up to $1000 reimbursement for materials. Garden Glory compost Voucher for up to 10 CY of material, when used to meet Soil Quality and Depth requirements.
- ***Is your program available to residential properties, commercial properties, or both?**
    - Lynnwood: both
    - Shoreline: both
    - SCD: both
    - Kitsap CD: both
    - Port Angeles: Either, however, the "project," whatever it may be, cannot be triggering MR 6-9. In other words, one of the stipulations is that it is a small-scale project.
- **What properties are eligible for your GSI assistance program?**
    - Olympia: The Rain Garden Incentive Program is targeted for residential properties, but commercial, school, or religious-use properties may also be considered for participation in the program. The incentive is not available for permitted rain gardens associated with new construction.
    - Everett: Any privately owned home within the Everett city limits.
    - Lynnwood: Yes, any property within City limits (essentially).
    - Shoreline: All private properties that meet the following requirements:
        - Rain garden: 10 ft from foundation, outside of dripline of trees, not over utility lines, and at least 50 ft set back from slope (10% grade or higher)
        - Native vegetation landscaping: outside of dripline of trees, at least 50 ft set back from slopes (10% grade or higher), must be on portion of property with existing grass, hardscape, or a noxious weed (these plants/hardscape are removed in the process)
    - SCD: most, depending on funding source
    - Kirkland: Single family residential, multifamily, non-profit, commercial located within the Forbes Creek watershed (per current grant funding) – planning to move to citywide in 2021
    - Puyallup: single family residential
    - Kitsap CD: private properties within unincorporated Kitsap
    - Port Angeles: Any privately owned property within City Limits.
    - PCD: Primarily residential properties, but also parks and churches on a case-by-case basis.
    - RainWise: RainWise available to all properties within identified out of compliance CSO areas; codes with existing detention not included. RainWise is a rebate program.
- **How do you prioritize the areas of your jurisdiction you target for GSI installations?**
    - Olympia: We have not specifically prioritized areas instead we use a scoring sheet to determine eligibility for the program based on: which creek basin the property is located; what kind of treatment is in the area; how much impervious surface is draining to the raingarden.

- Everett: We prioritize homes/properties that have had basement or property flooding from stormwater. Our participant numbers have been such that we have not had to turn anyone away, even if they are not in our prioritized area.
- Lynnwood: Residential was prioritized because it was the model the SCD brought to them. Moving forward, would like to be more particular and would like focus on more commercial buildings, properties that would have more pollution prevention impact (e.g., parking lots over residential roofs).
- Shoreline: Currently, we do not. Working on strategies to make program more accessible to lower-income households, overburdened communities. Working on strategies to increase environmental impact of program, which may include targeting basins based on SMAP recommendations.
- SCD: We have a ranking matrix, which includes environmental and outreach benefits.
- Kirkland: With grant funding, have focused on priority watersheds, planning to move to citywide in 2021
- Puyallup: We do not target specific areas. Currently the program is spread by word of mouth
- Kitsap CD: We use a rating matrix, taking into consideration County priority areas (PIC and Public Works priority areas) and greatest benefit to environment.
- Port Angeles: We used to target properties whose Storm was connected directly into Sanitary. We had incentives for them to disconnect, however, interest was low so we opened the program up to anyone interested. Currently, there is no prioritization by location or area. That said, the 19-24 permit requires an SWAP be developed which involves assessment and prioritization – therefore, on the horizon.
- PCD: Public or private, primarily residential, but we do include parks & churches. Prioritized within 3 basins (0.5M properties) – all ended up being in the most urbanized basins. Contracted with Forterra's GIS. Final report with targeted basins available (Melissa will send): canopy, impervious, WQ parameters, property type. PCD Board reviewed and weighed based on basin. Was not able to blend basins with census block data to get the equity info we truly wanted to include. Will look at partners' goals and plans to further target within the basins.
- RainWise: Out of compliance CSO basins are eligible. These basins have 1 overflow per year or more. Working on ways to offer the program more equitably, especially to those from historically underserved communities.

- ***How many full-time employees (FTEs) does it take to run this program?**
  - Everett: Two city staff work the program (program manager and technical lead) but their time would be the equivalent of ½ FTE. We contract with WSU Extension and Snohomish Conservation District to also assist with the program.
  - Lynnwood: 1 FTE
  - Shoreline: 1 FTE (although not 100% of the staff member's time goes to this program).
  - SCD: Four plus our crew which is normally 3-4 seasonal crew members.
  - Kitsap CD: 2-3
  - Port Angeles: Myself and an Engineering Tech work it into our schedule. It's a relatively small component we manage alongside development review, education and outreach,

and inspections. If I had to quickly estimate based on how much interaction, we have annually focus solely on the rebate program: maybe 0.1 FTE.. and that's probably rounded up.

- ***What is the annual budget of your program?**
    - Lynnwood: $30K paid to SCD in interlocal agreement. Staff time for Lynnwood not included. SCD bill Lynnwood for all work completed under this work.
    - Shoreline: $20K, not including staff costs
    - SCD: Depends on funding sources.
    - Kitsap CD: $50,000
    - Port Angeles: For reimbursement? $20K as of next year. To facilitate the program? Don't really have one specifically. It comes along with managing the stormwater permit and employees are paid out of the general fund which is supported by the stormwater utility.
- ***Does your jurisdiction help property owners with:**
    - ***Permitting?**
        - Lynnwood: no permitting required
        - Shoreline: not needed for this program
        - SCD: yes
        - Kitsap CD: only for rain gardens in ROW
        - Port Angeles: Yes
    - ***Engineering?**
        - Lynnwood: Utility checks, design – all SCD. All part of interlocal
        - Shoreline: no
        - SCD: yes
        - Kitsap CD: rarely
        - Port Angeles: Yes, engineering review and guidance
    - ***Contracting?**
        - Lynnwood: N/A
        - Shoreline: No
        - SCD: No
        - Kitsap CD: we provide lists of contractors trained/experienced with GSI
        - Port Angeles: No
- **Who conducts the design of the GSI feature(s)?**
    - Olympia: The applicant designs (or hires contractor) the feature and submits the site plan and feature specs with the application for staff review.
    - Everett: Homeowner, homeowner hired contractor or homeowner can get free assistance from WSU Master Gardener/Snohomish Conservation District due to the partnership the city has established with them.
    - Lynnwood: Snohomish Conservation District
    - Shoreline: Resident or a contractor they hire.
    - SCD: district engineer
    - Kirkland: Property owners and contractors hired by property owners
    - Puyallup: Either the homeowner, contractor or the Pierce Conservation district
    - Kitsap CD: KCD staff, in cooperation w. landowner

- Port Angeles: Design must meet City Standards. City Standards for Rain Garden and Permeable pavement are consistent with LID Design Manual, WA ECY SWMMWW, and Rain Garden Handbook for Western WA. WSU master gardeners provide guidance to the public on design.
- PCD:
  - PCD program staff: project manager level. Use RG Handbook sizing. In contact with Derek Hahn, SCD engineer, to adapt to their sizing.
    No resident has ever asked to do the design themselves. They ALL opt into PCD design services.
    PCD partners with WSU MGs for planting plan.
  - Contractor pricing has gone up so high for digging that residents are tending to build their own (excavating) rather than going with contractor.
  - Infiltration testing is conducted by homeowner and data given to PCD for use in design. PCD does not hold liability for systems that fail to perform based on the provided infiltration rate. Uses raingarden handbook method for soil drainage test.
- RainWise: The contractor designs gardens following design standards set forth by SPU. The design is pre-designed upwards of 90-95% and then field designed to meet specific site needs. Most sites are very similar.

- ***Is DIY ("do it yourself") an option?**
  - Lynnwood: No, but homeowner helps with planting.
  - Shoreline: yes
  - SCD: Yes, but they are not eligible for funds, only TA
  - Kitsap CD: Yes
  - **What resources do you provide to DIY program participants beyond the Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington?**
    - Lynnwood: No, but homeowner helps with planting.
    - Shoreline: List of RainWise certified contractors (North Seattle list), list of local nurseries, and King County Native Plant Guide.
    - SCD: Designs and planting plans.
    - Puyallup: Pierce Conservation District provides assistance with the siting, sizing and planting plan.
    - Kitsap CD: Site visits to determine best spot & infiltration test, links to suppliers of plants & materials, technical assistance.
    - Port Angeles: Kitsap County has some good resources that we forward on to DIYs. Again, the LID technical manual is good. Building Soil manual. City standards and plans. SWMMWW. The RG Handbook is by far the most used when talking with DIYers.
    - PCD: No. We show RG Handbook online. PCD gives 4-sheet design:
      1. layout with elevation, 2. planting plan, 3. quantities of soil & mulch & drain rock & estimated plant cost, 4. cross-section of the design
  - **Are there any other resources you wish were developed so that you could share them with DIY participants?**

        - Shoreline: Cost calculator (just found one from Everett!), a portfolio of rain garden and native vegetation landscaping images to browse for inspiration, and more example site plans that residents could plug and play or tweak before using as a planting plan.
        - SCD: None come to mind
        - Puyallup: We have some pamphlets, and City standard details, but mostly we would just point to them to the rain garden handbook for permeable pavement, we would point them to the rain garden handbook for infiltration testing and the contractor should help with the section.
        - Kitsap CD: No
    - **Do you provide any trainings or technical assistance for DIY participants?**
        - Lynnwood: Promote program via a rain garden training/workshop. Discuss maintenance.
        - Shoreline: Currently no, but plan to roll out a technical assistance workshop in Spring 2021. Workshop will cover sizing, designing, constructing, and maintaining a rain garden and how to amend soils and design native vegetation landscaping beds. After our behavior change evaluation for the NPDES permit, it was clear that technical assistance was one of the primary barriers to program participation.
        - SCD: When asked, usually by a funding partner. We do solo assistance via site visits for some cooperators.
        - Puyallup: I would answer questions if they email or call, but generally I point them to PCD since they have a program for assisting to implement rain gardens.
        - Kitsap CD: Yes
        - Port Angeles: We've participated in several free trainings to the community about Rain Gardens and LID over the years. Often in collaboration with WSU master Gardeners or Clallam Conservation Dist. and usually held at the local library or City Hall. Maybe one LID training per year on average – 2020 being an exception for obvious reasons.
        - PCD: Trial by fire. PCD does not have engineer on staff. Work with engineers w/cities of Tacoma & Puyallup. PCD provides the design (using revenues from its rates. Depending upon the jurisdiction and/or watershed group, a resident may have additional cost-sharing available to its residents, i.e. material costs, City of Tacoma's competitive grants to residents for total funding. Tacoma – rate reduction for SW Fees if disconnect all of their stormwater
- **Do you offer any technical assistance to program participants?**
    - Olympia: Yes we will provide site visits.
    - Everett: Not really sure what you mean by "technical assistance" but we do offer a fair amount of assistance. For all participants we calculate the minimum sizing for them based on the soil infiltration test. We give them a scaled aerial layout map of their property to help them design and size their rain garden. They get a rain garden budget sheet to help them figure out the cost. And for those who seem to need more pointed

assistance and are not hiring a contractor, we offer the services of WSU Gardeners for plant help and Snohomish Conservation District for any technical issues.
    - Lynnwood: Promote program via a rain garden training/workshop. Discuss maintenance.
    - Shoreline: Staff member acts as a resource during initial site consultation, as well as helping interested participants overcome barriers to completing application (e.g., sizing garden, resources for native plants, etc.). Will roll out technical assistance workshop in 2021.
    - SCD: yes
    - Kirkland: Yes, we offer ongoing assistance via phone, email, in-person visit. Offered design workshop for DIY participants
    - Puyallup: I would answer questions if they email or call, but generally I point them to PCD since they have a program for assisting to implement rain gardens.
    - Kitsap CD: Yes
    - Port Angeles: Yes and no. We are careful not to cross the liability line, however, we give technical guidance all the time that is supported by City Standards or established best practices. If someone wants to stray from these standards, they would need to retain the services of a qualified professional to assist them in their design.
    - PCD: Design w/ 4sheet design (Melissa offered to share an example so we can compare)
    - RainWise: Contractors can contact SPU for site-specific questions and SPU inspectors can come out to answer those questions. RainWise outreach grant through King County offers technical support (mainly language assistance to non-English speakers). Sends onsite interpreters to explain the program onsite. Support for maintenance – see notes below. Maintenance reminders and Sustainable Ballard offers checkups to targeted basins
- **What resources or trainings do you provide for internal staff working on this program?**
    - Olympia: Current staff are trained when there are any questions we rely on City Stormwater Engineer for technical advice.
    - Everett: Minimal. Most trainings are self-sought by the employee. The staff chosen for the program were chosen because of their pre-existing knowledge and/or interest in LID. The Western WA Rain Garden Handbook is used as a guide for the program. We also have staff train in the field with Snohomish Conservation District since they have installed countless rain gardens.
    - Lynnwood: SCD has a professional engineer. Not sure of any trainings for staff. SCD are well versed in rain gardens.
    - Shoreline: Internal training only, but plan to take the WSU Stormwater Center's LID design and/or maintenance course. May consider formalizing this as a training recommendation for future staff.
    - SCD: Nothing formalized, on the job training
    - Kirkland: WA Stormwater Center's online LID certification course
    - Puyallup: I am the only staff member really working on this. I attend design trainings, and social marketing training. I have the LID certification from the Washington stormwater center and I am a professional Engineer.
    - Kitsap CD: Webinars, WSU classes, on the job training

    - Port Angeles: A new hire will perform job shadowing for a bit until they're accustomed with the program and will attend some LID design trainings being offered within the region. After that, employees typically receive at least one LID related re-fresher training or LID update training a year – often on the LID topic of their choice.
    - PCD: No one else internally is working on it until another PM is hired. Will document institutional knowledge at that time. Will determine what PCD financial model is based on what STORM GSI Report shows.
    - RainWise: Internal support and learning; "passing the torch". Internal guides (how-to's for trainings, program implementations, onboarding). Twice a year there are contractor trainings that also help to onboard and train internal staff, as well. These trainings are now online.
- ***What success metrics do you use to track your program?**
    - Lynnwood: Aim to get a certain number of rain gardens in per year (7 rain gardens).
    - **How do you measure environmental impacts/benefits?**
        - Lynnwood: no, not really
        - Shoreline: Rain gardens – gallons of stormwater managed; number of rain gardens installed. Native vegetation landscape – sq feet converted; number of NVL beds installed
        - SCD: By internal and assessment matrix
        - Kitsap CD: Impervious area treated, gallons of water infiltrated or harvested for irrigation
        - PCD: gallons of flow disconnected from municipal stormwater systems.
    - **What are your measures of success for your outreach efforts?**
        - Lynnwood: No, target for outreach or number attending workshop. Use targeted mailings to neighborhoods that show interest in response to flyers, emails promotions.
        - Shoreline: We track our outreach methods (e.g., City newsletter, social media, annual surface water utility report, presentations). Also track the number of site consultations (initial site visit to determine program eligibility).
        - SCD: Numbers attended, activities, and follow up TA
        - Kitsap CD: Number of requests for assistance, projects implemented and number of projects passing yearly inspection.
        - PCD: None indicated. Program is successfully attracting participants without outreach-intensive effort.
- **What evaluation methods are you using for your program?**
    - Olympia: We are not using any evaluation methods for this program. I would be interested to learn what others are doing.
    - Everett: Our main objective is to have homeowners install rain gardens. At the end of each year, we evaluate our success rate and get feedback from rebate recipients. Depending on what we heard, we may tweak the program. We also evaluate the success of an installed rain garden with participant input and visual inspection by city staff.
    - Shoreline:
        - 1. During last evaluation, looked at the ratio of property owners that requested a site visit and were eligible for the program (interested participants) to those

that successfully completed the program (program participants). This ratio can serve as a proxy to understand if we are reducing barriers to program participation effectively. Although, we have funding for roughly 10 gardens, so this proxy is limited.
        - 2. Barriers/benefits assessment – quantify common barriers/benefits on a scale. Also request qualitative responses to explore additional barriers/benefits or provide more detail on the barriers/benefits.
        - 3. Demographic survey data of participants and interested participants compared to Shoreline demographic data to determine if program is accessible or reaching Shoreline property owners equitably.
    - SCD: Mapping, survey, and engineer review
    - Kirkland: Tracking environmental impacts (volume of water diverted, impervious area treated/removed, etc.), participant surveys
    - Puyallup: None currently, but we measure water into the ground and track number of participants per year.
    - PCD: Evaluate based on gallons infiltrated on annual basis
    - RainWise: Most basic: number of installations and total gallons managed. Also: number of connective gallons – the number of gallons managed that would have actually contributed to an overflow of a CSO (a multiplier based on a number of factors). Other metrics: number of new contractors; number of new contractors and customers of color; how many people attend events, stop by table (how many people are they reaching with their messaging). Also, Google analytics for website, webinar attendance and metrics. Annually, pull together the team to discuss lessons learned, how to improve program.
- **Do you partner with other organizations or contractors to manage aspects of your program, including for education, outreach, training, monitoring, maintenance, etc.? If so, with who and for what?**
    - Olympia: In the past we collaborated with WSU Native Plant Salvage to conduct raingarden classes. These are very costly. In the future we are planning on using an online workshop platform to conduct classes.
    - Everett: Yes, we partner/contract with WSU Extension and Snohomish Conservation District. They assist the city with public tours of rain gardens, public rain garden design workshops, design intensive workshops with rebate recipients, and one-on-one assistance with homeowners in rebate program.
    - Lynnwood: SCD also works with WSU Master Gardeners to support planting plan designs.
    - Shoreline:
        - 1. Partnering with Snohomish Conservation District to develop a technical assistance workshop.
        - 2. Partner with King Conservation District to support gardens in critical stream areas.
        - 3. Bringing in consultant to conduct audience research with underserved communities to understand how to make program more accessible. Consultant may also look at strategies to expand the program in other ways.
    - SCD: We have funding partners and partner with cities on implementation.
    - Kirkland: No. In the past, we contracted with Cascadia Consulting to manage the program outreach

- Puyallup: PCD. They provide education and assistance that complements our program. Master gardeners help put on training and help owners with plantings, give info and assistance to rain garden owners.
- Kitsap CD: We partner with several local organizations for education and outreach: WSU, County stormwater management and Dpt. of Health, PUDs.
- PCD: Melissa is only PM for WQ currently. Without marketing, she is busy. Plans to hire another PM in 2021. Subsequent marketing plan will be created that targets the 3 Basins.
- RainWise: King County & SPU partner to provide the RainWise program.
    - Stewardship Partners: They help take down barriers to participation for RainWise. Developed the RainWise access grant to reduce upfront costs to lower-income homes. GSI mini grants to help those who are not eligible for RainWise; these mini grants also include other GSI options that aren't available in RainWise. Mini grants funded through Waterworks grant program and based on the King County wastewater service area.
    - ECOSS & EnviroIssues & Sustainable Ballard: outreach contracts split by N & S CSO basins
    - Garden Hotline: help promote RainWise (informal?) and a resource to contractors, property owners.

- **How do you track and record project development and information for completed projects?**
    - Olympia: Our program is very small. We keep track of records in excel and project development is tracked through correspondence with property owner and site visits.
    - Everett: Excel spreadsheet
    - Lynnwood: Pretty informal, use a spreadsheet with interested participants and where they are at in the process. After program is complete, map rain gardens onto sister site http://discoverlynnwood.com/ which lists all the spots where rain gardens are at. Rain gardens need to be in front yard to participate in program (or at least these are prioritized and currently there is enough interest to choose those only).
    - Shoreline: City Works
    - SCD: Internal contract tracking and the like.
    - Kirkland: a very big spreadsheet
    - Puyallup: In files, based on year and project type and in a spreadsheet that we use to account for water infiltrated instead of sent to our system.
    - Kitsap CD: We record all activities on an Access database and a pipeline of active projects on a spreadsheet.
    - PCD: Weekly: track in Excel (gallons infiltrated). Annually: upload into GIS. Will add a equity layer. Will look at prioritized basis. How many are requesting TA outside of prioritized basis. (Non-prioritized basins - we will no longer be going onsite for properties).
    - RainWise: Use Access Database (King County database and a SPU database) to track all info relating to property owners, the property, the contractor, the installation details (including size), gallons captured, and the rebate amount).
- **Would you be willing share your programmatic documents? Examples include:**
    - **internal programmatic documents,**
        - Everett: prioritization matrix chart

- **policies,**
- **education and outreach materials,**
    - Everett: budget/sizing document
- **inspection forms,**
- **application forms,**
- **audience research reports,**
    - Everett: workshop evaluation survey
- **program evaluation reports, and**
- **engineering details**

Olympia: yes

Everett: Most of our documents can be found on our website ~~www.everettwa.gov/raingardens~~ I have attached all the other documents highlighted above.

Lynnwood: Contract between SCD and homeowners – get this from David Jackson. Cameron can share other documents.

Shoreline: yes

SCD: Most of these have private cooperator information and can't be shared. We can share examples.

Kirkland: yes

Puyallup: sure

Kitsap CD: I would have to check with my district coordinator

PCD:

1. 4-sheet design set (excel)
2. Basin prioritization report
3. Powerpoint slide to show breakout of cost-share programs available by respective jurisdiction / watershed

RainWise: happy to share all! Except for confidential information.

Inspections and Maintenance

- **Which inspections do your jurisdiction/agency conduct? Select all that apply:**
    - **Pre-construction**
    - **During construction**
    - **Post-construction**
    - **Maintenance**
    - **Other**

Olympia: pre-construction, during construction, We require pre-construction and post-construction photo documentation and receipts for materials

Everett:

- Pre-construction (yes – site assessment with city technical lead)
- During construction (yes – site inspection by city technical lead)
- Post-construction (yes – install approval by city technical lead prior to issuing rebate)
- Maintenance (yes – program manager conducts site visit 6 months after install)

(Then continued visual inspection and annual email check-ins over the ten year period)

Lynnwood: No real inspection forms, City and SCD are there through the process. Cameron does some maintenance "inspections" but pretty informal. No erosion control requirements during construction, especially on rainy days

Shoreline:

- Pre-construction: yes
- During construction: no
- Post-construction: yes
- Maintenance: yes, every two years for ten years

SCD:

- Pre-construction: yes
- During construction: yes
- Post-construction: yes
- Maintenance: occasionally
- Other: rarely

Kirkland:

- Pre-construction: We conduct a site assessment with the property owner, discuss appropriate project options for the site
- During construction: no
- Post-construction: yes
- Maintenance: yes

Puyallup:

- Pre-construction: yes
- During construction: yes
- Post-construction: yes
- Maintenance: yes

Kitsap CD: All

PCD: Varies by jurisdiction. No formal inspection services, but able to provide as-needed help.

RainWise:

- Pre-construction: Yes. Inspection reviewing the specific installation (all baked out) and how it will fit in the property.
- During construction – only if requested by a contractor or property owner
- Post-construction: Yes
- Maintenance: Yes
- Other: feasibility inspection allowing inspector and contractor to determine if property is eligible. Happens before pre-construction.

- **Who is responsible for conducting the inspections listed above?**
    - Olympia: Program manager sometimes accompanied by stormwater engineer
    - Everett: see above
    - Lynnwood: N/A
    - Shoreline: Staff member in charge of program (Surface Water Program Specialist)
    - SCD: Depends on the partner, usually the foreman or engineer
    - Kirkland: COK staff- Aaron Hussmann
    - Puyallup: Myself (Paul Marinnan)
    - Kitsap CD: Rain Garden Program staff
    - PCD: Not done on a formal basis. We hand the design to the homeowner and they do the digging and installation. If they want us to review their digging, we will go out on an as-needed basis.
    - RainWise: SPU inspects SPU CSO basins and KC inspects KC CSO basins
- **Who is responsible for the maintenance and how is maintenance of GSI features ensured? How long is maintenance required?**
    - Olympia: Property owner. Maintenance is required for 5 years
    - Everett: 10 years after install
    - Lynnwood: In SCD, the contract requires it but it isn't really enforced. It's encouraged. Ahead of walking tours, they let homeowners know and homeowners tend to jump on any needed maintenance to ensure the garden looks good. If home sold, not sure how the contract works. Will have to check with SCD.
    - Shoreline: Property owner responsible for maintenance. Maintenance is ensured with bi-annual inspections. Maintenance required for ten years (from covenant signing date)
    - SCD: The cooperators
    - Kirkland: Property owner. They are required to sign a 5-year maintenance agreement
    - Puyallup: Homeowner, with a maintenance agreement/O&M manual that is recorded on title
    - Kitsap CD: Landowner is responsible for maintenance for a period of 5 years, during which we do a yearly inspection.
    - PCD: Homeowner. No inspections. PCD may ask for permission to take pictures. Public properties – 3-yr maintenance & summer watering (agency takes over after 3-yrs). Jurisdictions – may have their own maintenance requirements. Puyallup: lien on property in exchange for materials cost; picture of rain garden, inflow and overflow on annual basis); Tacoma: pictures and story to communicate out the importance of the grant – but no maintenance requirement
    - RainWise: Property owners responsible for maintenance. Maintenance is required for 5 years on residential properties and 10 years for non-residentials that are over 2,000 square feet of rebated area (Big Roof program). RainWise can provide some support, in some occasions. For larger rebates that need help with maintenance, will host maintenance work parties at sites that educate others how to maintain and also help provide maintenance work at those sites. Don't have tons of enforcement capability; provide technical assistance resources (videos and guides on how to maintain).
- **Do you have any legal agreements to ensure access and maintenance of the GSI project(s)?**

- Olympia: No We have the signed application which includes the agreement to maintain for 5 years. No code or code enforcement.
- Everett: Yes, all homeowners sign and notarize a maintenance agreement that is tied to the deed of the house.
- Lynnwood: Not that Cameron is aware of. City-owned rain gardens, people are liable to fix this. But residential rain gardens Cameron doesn't think so.
- Shoreline: A maintenance covenant that is tied to the title of the house.
- SCD: The cooperator agreements include a provision for maintenance
- Kirkland: No
- Puyallup: Yes
- Kitsap CD: Yes, a Cooperative agreement and a Cost Share Assistance agreement.
- PCD: No. Lien in Puyallup is quasi-legal but not implemented by PCD.
- RainWise: There is an agreement in the contract that property owners agree to maintain (5 years) and Big Roofs (10 years). Part of the rebate packet.

Participant recruitment/advertising

- **How do you engage property owners to sign up for your program?**
  - **How do you engage with your audience using online tools and resources?**
    - Olympia: We advertise the program on Stream Team website and through Utility billing insert. We have not been aggressively promoting the incentive program.
    - Everett: We run a bill insert at the beginning of the year to advertise the rebate program. Every year we have a public rain garden tour for people to explore local rain gardens. All past participants must display rain garden signs in their yard. We have not utilized many online tools and resources. Given COVID-19 we have had to do some tweaking of the program. We made the informational rain garden workshop available online for people to view instead of having to attend an in-person workshop. We will probably keep that in place for 2021. Additionally, we may try to have our design intensives for rain garden recipients virtually in 2021. We were unable to do any design workshops for this year's recipients and that made the process a bit more tedious than normal.
    - Lynnwood: Host a rain garden workshop, website, e-news, social media promotions Have done outreach stuffers inside utility bills. Create an email list of people interested in rain gardens and send email notifications. Each year, they take everyone who has expressed interest, plot them on a map, and then look for neighborhood clusters (denser areas of interest). Choose multiple 4-block ish clusters and mail out to everyone in that cluster. This past year, mailed out to roughly 700 homes.
    - Shoreline: City newsletter, parks n rec guide, social media, annual surface water utility report, presentations to neighborhood groups, during non-COVID times, good old fashioned tabling at outreach events
    - SCD: Direct outreach, usually, but it depends on the funding source.
    - Kirkland: Facebook and Googles ads, utility bill inserts, newsletter articles, booth at farmers markets, neighborhood association meetings, neighbor to neighbor communication, yard signs

        - Puyallup: Word of mouth, we engage us. We have a website with information and applications
        - Kitsap CD: Through mailings, Facebook, our website, outreach events, community events, workshops. (follow up answer-) Facebook posts, videos, virtual tours
        - PCD: Outreach done by word of mouth or through participating jurisdictions. No direct outreach work for PCD.
        - RainWise:
            - In person events, tabling. Classic outreach.
            - COVID really pushed outreach to offer online RainWise primer for interested homeowners, specialty session on cisterns, contractor meet and greets in virtual room.
            - Website is a foundational outreach/advertising center for program info and events
            - Yard signs – good for branding
            - info signs and celebrations at big roof projects.
            - Mailings (post cards)
            - RainWise ambassadors promote via word of mouth
            - RainWise contractors also incentivized to promote program (because they earn money for these installations)
            - Door-to-door outreach
            - Strategic sponsorship at events (where program info is shared) and also speaking at events.
            - How do you engage with your audience using online tools and resources? Social media – mainly FB advertising, SPU uses NextDoor to promote for SPU & KC basins; likely doing a FB live.
- ****What messaging have you found that works to entice people to participate in the program?**
    - Lynnwood: Key messages: lowers risk of flooding, add beauty, attract birds and beneficial insects, filter stormwater runoff, provides habitat, protect salmon and wildlife
    - Shoreline: Our evaluation survey found that most people wanted to participate because their yard needed a makeover, they wanted to remove high-maintenance lawn, or because they wanted an environmentally friendly yard. Our common messages include:
        - Makeover/revamp your yard
        - Create a truly PNW garden
        - Low maintenance yard
        - Native plants are good for birds and beneficial bugs
        - Environmentally friendly yard
    - SCD: We work best by making the process as easy as possible
    - Kirkland: Appeal to people's desires to beautify their yards, manage drainage issues, help the environment
    - RainWise: Here are the top four reasons, in order, that past customers (from a 2018 survey of 331 RainWise participants in both SPU and KC basins) said they became RainWise:
        - Doing my part to protect Puget Sound

        - Rebates covered all or most of the costs
        - Wanted to help the CSO problem
        - Wanted to improve my landscape
        - Wanted to set an example
        - And here are the top barriers cited for those who are interested in RainWise, but have not initiated a project. These come from a 97-person 2019 survey of prospective customers administered by our consultant partners at Sustainable Ballard:
            - 1. Waiting for a follow-up check-in
            - 2. Unclear about the process
            - 3. Unresponsive contractor

    Of note from ECOSS, who assists residents in the South Seattle neighborhoods with RainWise: ECOSS has had to work really hard to reach non English speaking communities. When it comes to promoting a program like this, trust in the communities we serve has been essential to promote the program. In addition, messaging has had to be tweaked and targeted for it to resonate with different communities. This is something we do at ECOSS with all of our programs. Please consider this as you are planning outreach activities.

- **How do you identify your target audience?**
    - Olympia: By creek basin and treatment within basin area.
    - Everett: Since anyone who owns a home can participate in the program, we blanket the entire city with information about the rebate program (utility inserts, press releases, social media posts, and public tours and workshops) and do not necessarily target an audience.
    - Lynnwood: Cluster method – plot everyone who has expressed interest on a map and look for clusters (neighborhoods with a lot of interest)
    - Shoreline: Working on increasing outreach to overburdened communities. By comparing demographics of our program participants and interested program participants, we can see that this program is not reaching or is not meeting needs/interest of our lower-income, ELL, and minority groups. We are working on that. In our evaluation, also found that most interested homeowners had been in home for 5 or less years. Working on strategy to share program with new homeowners.
    - SCD: By jurisdiction and watershed
    - Kirkland: So far, we have funded our program via grants and have had a geographical focus (watersheds), coinciding with larger stormwater retrofit efforts in those watersheds
    - Puyallup: they contact us at this point
    - Kitsap CD: Based on who contacts us back, homeowners are typically interested in ways to solve flooding problems on their property, or to improve it in general
    - PCD: Geographically by basin/watershed, based on prioritization report
    - RainWise: Property owners in identified CSO basins throughout Seattle and KC.
- **Do you conduct targeted outreach to certain areas of your jurisdiction?**
    - Olympia: no.

    - Everett: When we started the rebate program, only homeowners in the north end of Everett (combined area) could qualify for the rebate program. We did letters and postcards to targeted homeowners in the north-end. Once the program went city-wide, we did what is listed in the previous question
    - Lynnwood: Yes, using cluster method. Targeted mailings.
    - Shoreline: not at this time
    - SCD: Depends on funding source
    - Kirkland: see above response
    - Puyallup: No, but we will
    - Kitsap CD: Yes
    - PCD: Yes, in basins identified as priority.
    - RainWise: For mailings, target postcards (e.g., for maintenance reminders).
    - Usually go to entire eligible list – but will look at cistern-only eligible areas and target with cistern webinar info.
- **How do you track your outreach efforts?**
    - Olympia: By response
    - Everett: Not sure how to answer this. I keep attendance records on how many attend workshops. Homeowners sign up for city site assessments at the informational workshops so we are able to track how many attended and then how many followed through with signing up for a site assessment. Additionally, I keep a monthly accomplishment log that tracks how many postcards were sent, inserts printed, etc. Is that what you mean?
    - Lynnwood: Informally. Really looking to meet target of 7 rain gardens installed per year.
    - Shoreline: We track our outreach methods (e.g., City newsletter, social media, annual surface water utility report, presentations). Also track the number of site consultations (initial site visit to determine program eligibility).
    - SCD: They are tracked by our outreach team consistently.
    - Kirkland: Map where outreach materials have been deployed and where we are seeing responses.
    - Puyallup: no tracking currently
    - Kitsap CD: Asking how & where people heard from us and using our pipeline of active projects
    - PCD: they don't
    - RainWise: Primarily tracked with internal documents and shared between KC and SPU via SharePoint. Google analytics; webinar attendance; media tracker; event trackers
- **What advertising strategies do you use (e.g. social media, postcards, etc.) and have you had more success with certain methods?**
    - Olympia: Postcards, letters, social media
    - Everett: Postcards, utility bill inserts, press releases, online calendars (city and local newspapers), letters, posters, social media posts (mostly Facebook/twitter). I honestly think that the bill inserts have been the most effective. Postcards and letters the least effective. Using posters (like concert/band-style posters) worked well since they could be put up in local cafes, libraries, Starbucks, etc. and other places where they would be enticed by the artwork and would read about the program. But bottom line, at this

point, word of mouth has been very helpful to get people in the door asking about the program. We continually push tours and other rain garden-related workshops so we can create 'normalcy' with the idea of installing a rain garden. I also think that 3 of the last 5 years the Everett Herald has run a news story about the rain garden program.
    - Lynnwood: Targeted mailers work very well.
    - Shoreline: City newsletter, parks n rec guide, social media, annual surface water utility report, presentations to neighborhood groups, during non-COVID times, good old fashioned tabling at outreach events. In the past have done postcard mailers to the entire city. Lots of success with mailed advertisements (City newsletter, parks n rec guide, annual surface water utility report, postcards).
    - SCD: Pre-covid, direct outreach and events, post-covid, social media and webinars.
    - Kirkland: Facebook and Googles ads, utility bill inserts, newsletter articles, booth at farmers markets, neighborhood association meetings, neighbor to neighbor communication, yard signs
    - Puyallup: we are working on it… ask in a year or two
    - Kitsap CD: We use both social media and mailings. Success varies with all methods but during Covid-19 and pre-election times people have not been engaging as well.
    - PCD: none
    - RainWise: Facebook is the more successful strategy; historically, postcard was a very strong method for reaching households before social media platforms were really formed. Strategic sponsorship at events and also speaking at events.
- **Do you use past participants to help promote the program? If so, how?**
    - Olympia: Tours and testimonials
    - Everett: We have. We have selected past participants to speak with the media about the program. Some have spoken at our initial informational workshops about the program. And one homeowner became a Master Gardener after installing a garden and assists with our design intensive classes.
    - Lynnwood: Past participants not mentioned. Using the cluster method, usually there is at least one person very interested in a rain garden and they will go door to door in their neighborhood to talk to neighbors about the program and get them to reach out to the city to make it more likely that their neighborhood will be selected.
    - Shoreline: Program participants have signs in yard (for front yard gardens). Have requested that they send in photos of the garden for advertising.
    - SCD: Yes, usually via testimony
    - Kirkland: Ask participants who have installed a project on their property if they would be willing to have a yard sign in their yard, advertising the program. Also ask for testimonials
    - Puyallup: yes, they spread the word during conversations.
    - Kitsap CD: Some past participants promote the program on their own
    - RainWise: Yes – ambassadors encourage participants to be advocates to neighborhoods and friends in CSO basins. The ambassadors have yard info boxes with RainWise info. Some of them tell their stories on webinars. Other participants promote by having a yard sign in their garden.

Participant education

- **Do you translate materials into languages other than English? If so, which languages?**
    - Olympia: No
    - Everett: We have not
    - Lynnwood: Had some support for Spanish speakers. Want to address racial equity. Work in an underserved area and target community centers, commercial properties. Hoping to work with Korean business.
    - Shoreline: We have not. Pending the results from our audience research with overburdened communities, we may do this soon.
    - SCD: Spanish and Korean have been the largest, but we have done several.
    - Kirkland: No
    - Puyallup: not at this time.
    - Kitsap CD: No
    - PCD: Yes, but not universally. Only when working with partners that have contact with non-English speaking audience. And then translation is conducted by the partner.
    - RainWise: Yes, main languages Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, a lesser extent. One pager about the program is in seven different languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese (2), Cambodian, Dali, (look at RainWise website). Contractor training that is now virtual is offered in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese
- **Do you compile and update frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents for your program? If so, how do you distribute them?**
    - Olympia: No but if I did I would post it on the program webpage, good idea!
    - Everett: We do have a FAQ's and Steps to Receive a Rebate informational sheets which are on our website and attached to all application packets that are distributed. All application and rebate paperwork are updated/refreshed each calendar year.
    - Lynnwood: not asked
    - Shoreline: FAQ available on webpage with program information.
    - SCD: We have some on our website and some are delivered when we do site visits or webinars.
    - Kirkland: We have an FAQ list on our website, but it isn't updated very often
    - Puyallup: yes, we have pamphlets on the website
    - Kitsap CD: No but we have a "what is a rain garden?" page on our website
    - RainWise: Did a while ago, FAQ has basic info. Used more for internal staff training, not usually asked for by participants. Made FAQ outdated by creating educational materials that address common questions.
- **Do you have in person or online workshops for participants?**
    - Olympia: We did in the past we are moving to a self- paced online workshop platform
    - Everett: Everything has been in person until 2020. We are transitioning some of the pieces to online but a lot of the program pieces work better in person so it will take some effort if we end up needing to transition to an exclusive online format.
    - Lynnwood: There is a rain garden workshop offered for all Lynnwood residents. This workshop helps drum up interest for the program but is not limited to program participants only.
    - Shoreline: Developing a technical assistance workshop for Spring 2021.
    - SCD: currently online only

- Kirkland: We had an in-person workshop for DIY participants, focused on rain gardens and native landscaping
- Puyallup: No but PCD and Master gardeners do
- Kitsap CD: We have done both but not since COVID19 restrictions
- RainWise: yes

Equity

- **Do you have any strategies for making the program more equitably accessible to lower-income, minority, English Language Learners (ELL), or other overburdened communities?**
    - Olympia: No but it would be great to have the Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington translated into a few languages.
    - Everett: We have translated some of the outreach materials for our mandatory GSI program given the demographics of the audience we have seen. But we have not done that for our voluntary rain garden rebate program.
    - Lynnwood: Using an understanding of the city: knows where POC, MF housing units, lower income areas, and non-English speaking businesses are in the city are and is targeting efforts there. Working to reduce program costs with MF units in overburdened communities: Current program cost is about $200-$300 for rain garden plants and believes that city could absorb this cost.
    - Shoreline: Upcoming audience research efforts will inform this.
    - SCD: Yes, we use the DOH social health map and similar resources. A lot depends on funding sources, but partners are generally supportive.
    - Kirkland: No
    - Puyallup: Not at this time
    - Kitsap CD: he Conservation District's programs are available to all levels of community
    - PCD: We do not currently. Another PCD program has taken lead to do equity programming – cultural ambassadors who find the community leaders and pay those residents to be the ambassador to bring the community to the program. Translated services provided. Cultural ambassadors responsible to translators.
    - RainWise: In the midst of the RainWise equity toolkit process – Hope to have new tools from that. Currently offer translated documents and real time interpretation for contractors, customers that need it. Culturally competent - not just translation. Outreach partners – ECOSS, Sustainable Ballard help this. 40K to multicultural marketing and recruit diverse contractors. Now have seven multicultural contractors. This has been a big investment, but may not be the most productive way to recruit and coach diverse contractors. Grants – RainWise Access grant reduces upfront costs. Contractors – direct rebate to them instead of to property owner so there are no out of pocket expenses. VPO. Some contractors may not be able to offer this, including some from overburdened communities, which can further burden them. GSI Mini Grants – not taxed, easy to apply for. People love them for helping getting GSI in the ground.
- **Does your GSI assistance program support women and minority owned businesses in any way?**
    - Olympia: not specifically
    - Everett: No, our program is exclusively for private homeowners.

- Lynnwood: Working on this front through more targeted outreach
- Shoreline: No
- SCD: We can't give specific support, but several are on the resources we distribute.
- Kirkland: Not specifically, but I know that women and minority owned landscaping businesses have installed some of our projects
- Puyallup: Not specifically, but one of the contractors on our list is a women owned business.
- Kitsap CD: The Conservation District does not favor or underserve any group of people as far as I know
- RainWise: RainWise outreach grant – small contractors certified program (woman and minority owned businesses) can apply for this grant.

Workforce and Contractors

- **Are your program's GSI projects installed by contractors, program staff, property owners (DIY), or some combination?**
  - Olympia: Property owners typically do install but sometimes hire a landscape contractor to do the work for them.
  - Everett: Rain gardens can be installed by property owners or contractors. In some cases, Snohomish Conservation District will install a rain garden for a property owner but the city still treats this the same as the property owner hiring a contractor.
  - Lynnwood: installed by SCD
  - Shoreline: Property owners OR a contractor they hire.
  - SCD: staff
  - Kirkland: A combination of contractors and property owners
  - Puyallup: Generally contractors, sometimes the property owners can do pasts of the installations of rain gardens.
  - Kitsap CD: Most projects are installed by a contractor and program staff through our "Dig Day" option, some are done by homeowners and their own contractor, some DIY.
  - PCD: combination
  - RainWise: contractors
- **Do you provide technical training for contractors participating in your program? If so, please describe.**
  - Olympia: Not specifically in our program. We provide a stormwater facility training for contractors which includes a short in-field rain garden segment on maintenance. We have offered EcoPro training in Thurston County in the past.
  - Everett: We offered a 2-day intensive Rain Garden Design & Install for Landscapers for three years (2013, 2014 and 2015) when we knew we were starting up a rain garden rebate program. Our rebate program started in 2014. The program was well attended but attendance was way down in 2015 so we felt that we had saturated the local market and made that the last year we offered it. We created a contact sheet for the public to see who attended our training. We made clear we were not endorsing these contractors/landscapers but they had only attended our training. And every year we inform homeowners that it is very important to visit past projects of any contractor they are going to hire.

    - Lynnwood: N/A
    - Shoreline: No
    - SCD: N/A
    - Kirkland: We provided an initial workshop for contractors regarding the program, our standard plans, and the program rebate
    - Puyallup: No we just check to make sure they know what they are doing before putting them on the list.
    - Kitsap CD: Yes, but most contractors we use have taken a WSU class/workshop.
    - RainWise: Yes, two contractor orientations provided every year in English and two in targeted languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese). RainWise contractor academy – separate track that is more in depth and meant to train contractors. Academy is competitive (21/25 applicants accepted) with diversity goals for trainees. How to run a small business and how to work with the RainWise program. 12-week program.
- **Do you perceive there to be a shortage of qualified contractors for design, installation and/or maintenance of GSI projects?**
    - Olympia: yes
    - Everett: Yes? I think there are a handful of contractors that have made rain gardens their niche and they are in high demand. Some homeowners have mentioned it is hard to get someone to come out since they are so busy and I have noticed that their quotes have gotten more expensive over the last few years, especially given that many of the installed gardens are relatively small gardens.
    - Lynnwood: N/A
    - Shoreline: I have heard this from other jurisdiction staff, but have not received feedback from any program participants that they have experienced this. We provide a list of contractors (developed through RainWise). I think we really benefit from our proximity to Seattle – their trained North Seattle contractors list works well for us.
    - SCD: not specifically
    - Kirkland: Yes, this seems to be the number one challenge for participants. Also, that these projects are of a relatively low dollar value compared to other landscaping projects, therefore a lower priority for landscapers
    - Puyallup: Not as far as I know, but it would always be better to have more on the list for options.
    - Kitsap CD: No
    - RainWise: Yes. Especially in South end and in lower income neighborhoods. A programmatic limiting factor – they have the budget to install more, but they need more contractors to do the work. COVID has resulted in contractors doing work more "locally" and South Seattle has been less served because of this.
- **Do you train/educate professional designers or contractors?**
    - Olympia: see above
    - Everett: see above
    - Lynnwood: N/A
    - Shoreline: No
    - SCD: through on the job training
    - Kirkland: No

- Puyallup: No
- Kitsap CD: We have trained some contractors on the job – they usually understand very quickly.
- RainWise: yes, see above.

Lessons Learned

- ****What lessons have you learned while implementing this program?**
  - Lynnwood: SCD has a lot on their plate – City plays important role of providing support to residents and ensuring communications between residents and SCD run smoothly. Something is going wrong with Utility locates, which is bad for the program. In the contract that homeowner signs, SCD insurance covers costs but still puts homeowners out. Be upfront with people not chosen for the program. 7/300 rain gardens funded. Have a document/language ready to go to explain selection process. Lynnwood street crews haul soil away and this really helps excavation process. It makes the project goes really quick. Doing all the construction at the same time – streamlines process and saves costs. There is usually a champion participant that goes door to door to promote program in their neighborhood in order to be qualifying cluster neighborhood. Always one neighbor that isn't 100% on board and is hesitant. It's a headache to work with them because they never seem to be satisfied and any issues that come up tend to be even worse.
  - Shoreline: Clear, concise explanations and materials detail program requirements and expectations. Understanding what a rain garden or native vegetation landscaping is can be a lot for some property owners; need to make sure program requirements are clearly communicated.
  - SCD: that removing barriers to participation is the best way to gain support
  - Kirkland: Need to schedule in enough time to provide follow-up support to participants. DIY is a good option to provide, to make projects more affordable, but require a lot more assistance by city staff.
  - Kitsap CD: The number of people actually following through completion of a project is a fraction of those who seem interested at first
  - RainWise: Relationship between agencies is fundamental – continue open dialogue, regular meetings to facilitate this. Contractors are essential to this program. A critical partner. Always think they have seen it all, but continue to see something new. Working with outreach teams is far more efficient than using a staff member – very diverse outreach teams that support them.
- ****What are your biggest barriers to implementing this program?**
  - Lynnwood: This model works really well for Lynnwood. Wanting to expand to more environmentally impactful sites and to overburdened communities.
  - Shoreline: Time. Slowly, but surely modifying program to better address environmental and equity goals.
  - SCD: funding
  - Kirkland: Having an ongoing funding source
  - Kitsap CD: Site constraints, costs and changing economic conditions of people (family, job change, health, moving, etc.)

- RainWise:
    - Economic atmosphere – hard hit economy hard for contractors and property owners to work together; did help RainWise hire landscapers working for work in the beginning during the recession. Personal finance limits participation.
    - Documents -too long for many interested participants.
    - Staff turnover; inspection staff especially tough. Takes about 3 months to onboard and tend to lose them every 6 months to 2 years.
    - Very risk averse legal department.
    - Contractor availability
    - The taxable "income" is a big barrier. Working to remove this.
    - Interesting difference for RainWise inspectors vs other inspections teams is that customers do not pay for inspection services
    - Language still a barrier – rebate app in two languages, transcreating/interpretation for the contractor workshops is tough.

- ****Based on what you know now, what would you change about your program if you could?**
    - Lynnwood: not asked
    - Shoreline: I'd like to see more GSI features offered (depave, trees, pervious pavement, downspout disconnect). I'd like to see more partnerships/outreach to commercial and institutional properties, but this may need a different sister program with more funds or funds provided as an upfront grant. Would like to see more equity built into program.
    - SCD: nothing yet
    - Kirkland: Create a structure to ensure that projects are of greatest positive environmental impact, remove financial barriers to participation
    - Kitsap CD: Not sure
    - RainWise:
        - Make it something that isn't taxed
        - Some kind of alternative program for lower income households. Non-profit like DirtCorp could help reduce installation costs.
        - In a perfect world, every property could be eligible.
        - Removing all the complication – but the complication is there to protect the agencies and all partners. It's bureaucratic for a reason.
        - Hoping there is more funding for the in-depth RainWise contractor academy next year.
        - SPU contracting is really difficult, which is why KC uses the grant to bring in outreach teams. It's very difficult.

- **What are the largest fears/concerns you hear from managers or elected officials about your program?**
    - Everett: I think the biggest initial concern is no surprise. It is the use of stormwater funds for private homeowners. But Everett has had so many issues with flooding that we have worked hard to make the argument that rain gardens as one of the tools in the toolbox that can combat stormwater flooding and by homeowners signing an agreement to maintain a rain garden they are becoming a part of the larger city stormwater infrastructure that benefits all.

- Lynnwood: They receive really positive feedback. It's really easy for participants to participate in. They get to put a lot of feedback/input on the ultimate process. Does question the value of program – it's really educational unless better targeted to areas with more pollution, areas that reduce significant volumes to MS4.
- Shoreline: I have not heard any. I want to see this program move beyond education and create a stronger environmental impact. I leadership would echo that goal.
- SCD: nothing yet
- Kirkland: None, they've generally had a very positive response.
- Puyallup: I am always concerned about being defunded, but we have been lucky to have support, especially because we tie this to education and outreach and the municipal permit.
- Kitsap CD: Not aware of any
- RainWise: Biggest fear is bad press; potential for bad public perception to ruin the program. Program is inherently inequitable because it seeks to solve CSO problems, so need the property eligible to participate. Need the startup funds to begin program.

Other

- **How many requests do you get from interested property owners per year?**
  - Olympia: 2-3
  - Everett: We usually hold three one-hour informational workshops that are attended by about 100 people. We make sure to hold the workshops at different locations throughout the city (north end, south end and middle section). Of those 100, about 30 -40 property owners sign up for a site assessment. After the site assessments is where the biggest drop off occurs since this is where the city may reject properties and homeowners have their first assignment of completing and turning in their soil infiltration results. If a homeowner turns in their soil infiltration tests and pass, they tend to stay in the program unless something unexpected comes up (family emergency, money issues, illness, etc.)
  - Lynnwood: This year, 300 interested. At this point, it's always more than they can fund.
  - Shoreline: Not sure, but I estimate well over 100. We have funding up to roughly ten gardens per year, with 7-10 gardens a year installed on average.
  - Kirkland: Since the program has been grant funded up to this point in 2-year cycles, this question doesn't really apply
  - Puyallup: 3-4 recently
  - Kitsap CD: between 100 and 300
  - RainWise: Around 1100 people. About 200 inquiries from the Garden Hotline per year; about 800 contacts collected per year from workshops, tabling, etc.; and ECOSS typically gets about 60-100 inquiries per year.
  - **Of those, how many of those sites do you actually install GSI projects on per year?**
    - Olympia: 1-2
    - Everett: We usually install between 12 - 16 per year.
    - Lynnwood: 7/300
    - SCD: A few dozen. Depends on the year, our schedule, and funding sources
    - Puyallup: 2-3 recently

        - Kitsap CD: 40-60 (40 rain gardens and 10+ other practices)
        - RainWise: 200-250 installed between SPU and KC
- **How do you ensure this program is not a gift of public funds? Do you have a policy in place to ensure your program does not provide public funds for private benefit?**
    - Olympia: Program incentives are vetted through our legal staff
    - Everett: We treat all installed rain gardens (voluntary and mandatory), even those on private property, as a part of the city's stormwater infrastructure. Hence the reason they must be maintained for at least 10 years (voluntary) or in perpetuity (mandatory).
    - Lynnwood: People who aren't chosen have given this feedback – but they run on a cluster model and rely on SCD expertise to select the best sites. One felt it was really unfair and felt outreach efforts were not enough. Hard to reach everyone. It's also not a completely free program – people have to invest. In this way, it's a cost-share.
    - Shoreline: We consider these installations stormwater facilities and have strict design standards and maintenance requirements to ensure they meet this criteria. As the stormwater utility, our role is to manage stormwater throughout the City. We collect surface water management (SWM) fees to do this from property owner. If a property owner wants to manage surface water onsite and has an eligible property, we can work with them to use a portion of the SWM fees we collect to install an onsite surface water facility.
    - SCD: That is part of our ranking matrix
    - Puyallup: Our perspective is that these onsite infiltration facilities benefit the property owner and the City as well. We are leveraging private property to benefit the City storm system. Instead of building retrofits on the City property, through this program we are able to build them on private property and have them maintain them. This is seen as a large benefit to the City.
    - Kitsap CD: The Rain Garden Program was established in partnership w. the County to take care of stormwater solutions on private property. We aim at giving priority to sites with the most benefit to the environment. It has been determined that an environmental benefit does not increase property value so it is not considered a gift. I don't think we have a specific policy.
    - RainWise: Utility gets a better payoff working with property owners to install on private property than utility doing this in ROW, parks. There was a determination/approval that demonstrated RainWise provided a public benefit to all rate payers.
- **Do GSI installations in your jurisdictions incur a personal tax liability for property owners? Do you require property owners to provide a W-9 when receiving/applying for funds? Please provide a short explanation of why your jurisdiction does or does not consider GSI rebates/funds to be taxable income, if you're familiar with that decision or tax code interpretation.**
    - Olympia: No. We do not consider this to be a tax liability for property owners because our incentive amount is low $400.
    - Everett: We were able to get a federal exception for our backflow rebate program and we have chosen to apply that exception to our rain garden rebate program as well.
    - Lynnwood: No
    - Shoreline: Yes and yes, property owners must submit a W-9.

- SCD: some may, but most do not
- Kirkland: yes and yes. City of Kirkland interprets the tax code in a way that requires participants to declare rebate as taxable income – I don't really have much info on this topic beyond that
- Puyallup: Good question, I will have to talk to finance. I believe that we consider it a reimbursement, so it is not taxed.
- Kitsap CD: No and no
- RainWise: yes

- **What are the factors that limit the maximum reimbursement for GSI projects, and how could this budget be expanded?**
  - Olympia: This program allows for up to ten $400 reimbursements per year totaling $4000 if maxed out. This is where the budget is set for this program. Part of the reason is that we want property owners to commit their own funds is because we believe it makes them more likely to maintain the raingarden into the future because of the investment they have put into installing it.
  - Everett: We set the budget amount for the rebate program at $50,000 in the initial year (2015) and have not really felt the need to expand or shrink the program budget at this time. Recently, we have been contemplating expanding the rebate program to include more than rain gardens (french drains, bioswales, etc.) but this would probably only happen initially with grant funding.
  - Lynnwood: N/A. Homes are selected based on suitability (utility lines, downspout connections, infiltration, visibility to public, ease of access for machines/trucks) and garden, outside of plants, is completely funded. No reimbursement process – City pays SCD for costs at end of project.
  - Shoreline: Rebate is based on area of contributing area (e.g., roof, driveway) for a rain garden and area of land converted for the native vegetation beds. We allow combination projects and the area must be at least 400 square feet. The rebate is $2.50/sq feet of contributing area or converted area with a maximum rebate of 800 square feet. This means that we provide rebates from $1,000 to $2,000.
  - SCD: timing, funding, and more strategic partnerships
  - Kirkland: Rebates were determined by the amount of grant funding available to us and the need to meet particular grant deliverables
  - Puyallup: We have maximums for each program item. We have requested additional money from Council this past year and have been given it.
  - Kitsap CD: The amount is set by the County's stormwater division and approved by the County commissioners.
  - RainWise: Square foot of contributing area is how rebate is calculated. Reimbursement tied to costs for jurisdiction installations – need to be more efficient/cheaper than jurisdiction