

What is an MSBU?

An "MSBU" (Municipal Service Benefit Unit) is a non-ad valorem assessment district established in the unincorporated area of Seminole County to provide funding for an essential improvement in a specific geographic area within the county taxing district. An MSBU consists of a group of properties that share in the benefit and cost of that improvement.



Municipal Services Benefit Unit Program

What projects will qualify?

The Seminole County MSBU Program offers MSBU opportunities for three types of community improvements:

- **Street lighting** which includes lighting fixtures, poles and utilities for residential communities;
- **Aquatic weed control** which includes chemical, mechanical and biological control of aquatic weeds;
- **Construction projects** inclusive of lake restoration, retention pond renovation, road paving & related drainage, sidewalks, centralized water and/or sewer line extension, and neighborhood wall reconstruction.

What are the basic requirements?

The Seminole County Board of County Commissioners will give approval consideration for an MSBU when the following criterion are met:

- The benefiting property is located in unincorporated Seminole County.
- The property upon which the improvement is to be made is publicly owned, leased or granted easement.
- Two or more parcels receive benefit and participate in the MSBU.
- Project is supported by majority of owners
- MSBU Program Guidelines/Procedures are satisfied.

Who coordinates the projects?

The process of creating an MSBU begins by application. The MSBU Program works closely with the applicant throughout the project. The MSBU Program is responsible for:

- Providing information about the MSBU process
- Coordinating Cost Estimates
- Determining owner support
- Coordinating BCC review
- Obtaining and Monitoring contracts
- Determining assessment rates
- Maintaining MSBU records

The applicant and other community liaisons are responsible for promoting the project and encouraging interest and support in the community.

How is project support determined?

A Petition for Improvement document is distributed by the MSBU Program to determine the level of property owner support. The petition communicates:

- Project scope
- Estimated cost of the project
- Estimated per parcel cost share
- Responsibilities & Expectations

Property owners are requested to sign and return the petition indicating their support or opposition to the proposed MSBU. Street lighting projects require a support level of 55% while all other project types require 65%.

What costs are included in an MSBU project?

Project cost is based on actual expenditures required in support of the project. The total cost of a project may include:

- Project Analysis
- Engineering/Design
- Implementation
- Construction
- Operating or Providing the improvement
- Administration
- Financing
- Other direct costs

Cost estimates are provided at various stages in the MSBU process based on project analysis and/or engineering or design requirements. For most projects, a range of estimated cost is identified and continuance of the project is subject to not exceeding a specific level of expenditure.

For projects requiring contracted analysis and/or statement of probable cost, the expense of the analysis is prepaid by the applicant or other private sources. Provisions are available for crediting the prepayment to the final assessments, given MSBU creation and project completion.

How do I request an MSBU?

Simply contact the MSBU Program to discuss your project or to request an application packet. Application packets detailing the MSBU process for each project type are readily available. Application fees vary according to project type. Payment of application fee is required along with completed application to initiate the MSBU creation process.

How are assessments calculated?

The properties benefiting from the improvement share equitably in the cost. The assessment assigned to benefiting properties is based on total project cost, the nature of the benefit provided and the number of benefit units. Depending on what is most appropriate for the project, allocation of cost may be per parcel, per home site, per front foot, or other equitable measure.

When are assessment payments collected?

For most MSBU projects, the County provides the initial funding and repayment is collected from the benefiting properties through non-ad valorem assessment on the property tax bill. Assessments are either **fixed term** or **variable rate**.

Fixed term assessments are related to projects requiring extended financing over a period of years to enhance the affordability to property owners. Variable rate assessments are assigned to MSBUs that do not have a set closure date and for which the assessment rate is calculated annually based on the estimated cost to provide the improvement in the forthcoming year.

10 Steps of the MSBU Process

Step	What to Expect
1	An application packet is requested from the MSBU Program. Applicant reviews application packet information in detail. MSBU resolves questions or concerns regarding process.
2	Applicant completes and submits application with the required application fee and documentation.
3	MSBU Program reviews application and scope of services, and onfirm feasibility and acceptance of project application.
4	MSBU Program provides applicant with a (rough) cost estimate of requested improvement.
5	MSBU Program reviews project scope and cost estimates and offers detailed information regarding the requested MSBU. Information is available to applicant, liasions and/or the community. <i>[If applicable]</i> MSBU Program confirms project analysis fee.
6	<i>[If applicable]</i> Applicant submits payment for preliminary engineering, analysis and/or probable cost statement fee.
7	MSBU Program coordinates the Petition for Improvement process . <i>[If applicable]</i> Applicant obtains/submits easement agreements.
8	The Board of County Commissioners conducts a Public Hearing to consider creation of requested MSBU. <i>[Adoption of governing ordinance]</i>
9	MSBU Program, designated department and community liaison(s) implement and complete authorized project. Assessments will be included on the first available tax roll.
10	<i>[If applicable]</i> The Board of County Commissioners conducts a second Public Hearing to establish final costs and provide notification of payment options after project commpletion.

Need Information? Call (407) 665-7178
 For On-line services visit the MSBU Program website :
www.seminolecountyfl.gov/msbu

Related Terminology

- Assessment - a fixed value or dollar amount based on cost and benefit
- Benefit - direct or indirect assistance or advantage
- BCC - Board of County Commissioners
- Fixed Term Assessment – financed assessment with specific repayment terms related to projects that require extended financing to enhance affordability
- Liaison - a representative of the benefiting community
- Lien - a legal claim of one person/entity upon the property of another person to secure the payment of a debt or the satisfaction of an obligation
- Municipal – civic, public or community
- Municipal Services Benefit Unit –a designated geographic area or group of properties organized for the purpose of acquiring specific services or improvements, and which are thereby assessed on an equitable basis for the improvements provided to that specific group of properties
- Non-ad valorem assessment - special assessment included on the property tax bill for a specific benefit or improvement
- Ordinance - formal legislative enactment by the Board of County Commissioners
- Petition for Improvement - a formal written request addressed to the Board of County Commissioners used to demonstrate support of a project
- Public Hearing - a public meeting conducted by the BCC
- Unit – group of properties that receive common benefit from improvement
- Unincorporated area - a geographic area that is not within the taxing boundaries of a city
- Variable Rate Assessment – assessment for ongoing services with annual assessment adjusted per budgeted expenditures for continuing services in the forthcoming service year

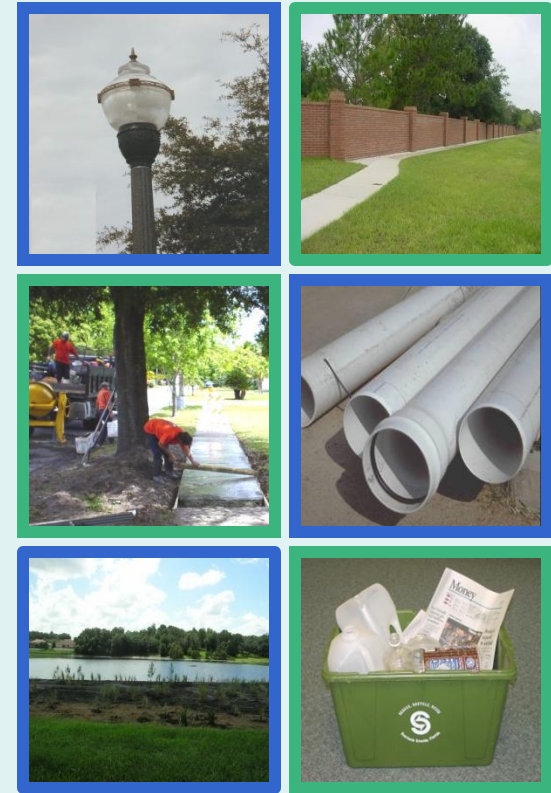
For additional information:
MSBU Program
 1301 East 2nd Street
 Sanford, FL 32771
 (407) 665-7178 or visit our website:
www.seminolecountyfl.gov/msbu



What is an MSBU?

An Option to Make Improvements to Your Community

Unincorporated Seminole County



Municipal Services Benefit Unit Program
Seminole County Government
Department of Fiscal Services
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