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Connecting Constituents with Federal Programs for Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Projects

Congress has established programs to assist constituents—including individuals, organizations, and local governments—with drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects. This In Focus includes a list of selected federal grant, loan, and other programs that support such projects. The following programs vary in scope and funding level and are not a comprehensive list of all potentially relevant programs for a given project.

Federal assistance programs are designed to meet goals authorized by Congress and often target community needs. Most federal grant funds go to state and local governments, which in turn may issue sub-awards to other entities. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact federal agencies, state agencies, or both, for information on eligibility, the application process, award cycles, and funding availability. Each program's funding availability depends on annual appropriations. Where applicable, program websites and Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) numbers are provided to assist interested applicants with accessing more information about each program. CFDA numbers can be used by potential applicants to search for and identify potential funding opportunities at <https://sam.gov/content/assistance-listings>.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Programs

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) receives annual appropriations for several drinking water and wastewater infrastructure programs.

State Revolving Funds Programs

State Revolving Funds (SRFs) programs are federal-state partnerships wherein EPA provides grants to the states (and Puerto Rico) to capitalize revolving funds. States then administer these funds as loans to community water and wastewater systems and to other entities for infrastructure projects and related activities necessary to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act or the Clean Water Act. From EPA's SRF appropriations, the agency provides funding to the U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and federally recognized tribes for eligible water infrastructure projects, because these entities do not have SRF programs. <https://www.epa.gov/dwsrf> and <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf>

Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program

This program provides grant funding for projects that help communities manage urban stormwater runoff (e.g., addressing combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows). CFDA Number 66.447; <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/sewer-overflow-and-stormwater-reuse-municipal-grants-program>

Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act

The Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act provides long-term, low-cost loans for eligible water and wastewater infrastructure projects. The minimum project size is \$20 million for large communities and \$5 million for small communities (populations of 25,000 or less). CFDA Number 66.958; <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>

Safe Drinking Water Act Programs

The Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities program provides grants to public water systems in underserved, small, and disadvantaged communities for projects that help communities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Beginning in 2020, EPA dedicated a portion of this funding for projects serving American Indian and Alaska Native populations.

The Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Program makes available grants to assist disadvantaged communities with replacing lead service lines and removing potential sources of lead in drinking water. CFDA Number 66.443; <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reduction-lead-exposure-drinking-water>

The Lead Testing in School and Child Care Drinking Water Grant Program provides funding to assist schools and childcare programs with testing for lead in drinking water. Tribal consortia, on behalf of tribes, are included among eligible applicants. CFDA Number 66.444; <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-lead-testing-school-and-child-care-program-drinking-water>

Training and Technical Assistance for Small Systems Funding

This program funds technical assistance efforts for small public drinking water and wastewater systems, including training, site visits, and other support. CFDA Numbers 66.436 and 66.424; <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/training-and-technical-assistance-small-systems-funding>

U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Grant Program

This grant program funds drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects in both the United States and Mexico that are within 100 kilometers (62 miles) of the southern border. Project sponsors can apply to the program through the North American Development Bank, which screens for initial eligibility and prioritizes projects using EPA's ranking methodologies. CFDA Number 66.202; <https://www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/us-mexico-border-water-infrastructure-grant-program>

U.S. Department of Agriculture Programs

Through the USDA Rural Utilities Service's Water and Environmental Programs, rural communities may be able to obtain technical assistance and financing to develop drinking water and wastewater disposal systems.

Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program

The loan and grant program provides funding to eligible communities for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and stormwater drainage. CFDA Number 10.760; <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>

Water & Waste Disposal Grants to Alleviate Health Risks for Tribal Lands and Colonias

This program provides federally recognized tribes and *colonias* (unincorporated, economically distressed communities along the southern border in AZ, CA, NM, or TX), and other rural, low-income communities facing significant health risks with funding to improve access to safe and reliable drinking water and waste disposal facilities and services. CFDA Number 10.770; <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-grants-alleviate-health-risks-tribal-lands-and-colonias>

Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants

This program assists eligible communities in preparing for, or recovering from, emergencies that threaten the availability of safe, reliable drinking water. CFDA Number 10.763; <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/emergency-community-water-assistance-grants>

Revolving Funds for Financing Water and Wastewater Projects (Revolving Fund Program)

This program assists qualified nonprofits with establishing revolving loan funds that can be used to extend and improve water and waste disposal systems in rural areas. CFDA Number 10.864; <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/revolving-funds-for-financing-water-and-wastewater-projects>

Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program

This program assists qualified nonprofits and tribes with establishing a revolving loan fund to increase access to clean, reliable water well and septic systems for households in eligible rural areas. CFDA Number 10.862; <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-decentralized-water-systems-grant>

Selected Other Federal Programs

U.S. Economic Development Administration Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

These two programs provide grants to distressed communities for various types of economic development

projects, including public works projects, such as water and sewer system improvements. CFDA Numbers 11.300, 11.307; <https://eda.gov/programs/eda-programs/>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grants

This program provides flexible federal funding to states and localities to support economic development, community development, and infrastructure, including drinking water and wastewater projects. CFDA Numbers 14.228 & 14.218; <https://www.hud.gov/states>

U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Disaster Assistance

This SBA program provides low-interest, long-term loans following a federally certified disaster. Loans are available to private for-profit and private non-profit drinking water and wastewater utilities. CFDA Number 59.008; <https://www.epa.gov/fedfunds/small-business-administration-loans-available-water-and-wastewater-utilities>

U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, WaterSMART Grants

WaterSMART grants provide cost-shared financial assistance on a competitive basis for water management improvements, including water efficiency, water reuse, desalination, and drought resilience projects. CFDA Number 15.507; <https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/weeg/>

Regional Commissions

Four active regional commissions receive federal appropriations for regional economic development, which may be used for drinking water and wastewater projects, among other purposes. The commissions are the Appalachian Regional Commission, <https://www.arc.gov/>; the Delta Regional Authority, <https://www.dra.gov/>; the Denali Commission, <https://www.denali.gov/>; and the Northern Border Regional Commission, <https://nbrc.gov/>.

Additional CRS Resources

The CRS Grants and Federal Assistance website, <https://www.crs.gov/Resources/Grants>, contains resources for Congress, including CRS Report R46471, *Federally Supported Projects and Programs for Wastewater, Drinking Water, and Water Supply Infrastructure*. CRS reports are publicly available at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>.

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