

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What does the WIIN Act, section 2104, authorize?

Part E of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), as amended by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) of 2016 and the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, authorizes EPA to award grants to assist public water systems in underserved, small and disadvantaged communities with meeting the requirements of the SDWA.

2. What is the objective of the Grant Program?

The principal objective of the Grant Program is to support drinking water projects and activities in underserved, small and disadvantaged communities that are unable to finance projects to comply with drinking water regulations under the SDWA. Additionally, the grant funding provides assistance to communities to manage drinking water concerns through household water quality testing, including testing for unregulated water contaminants. Projects and activities eligible for assistance can include infrastructure projects; technical, managerial, and financial capacity building activities; and activities necessary for a state to respond to a contaminant.

3. Who is eligible to apply for the grant?

The Grant Program is a noncompetitive program. Eligibility to apply for and receive funds is limited to the geographical 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and tribes within the U.S.

4. Will funding be made available to support drinking water systems that serve tribes?

Yes, the Grant Program includes a tribal allotment of 2% of the funds appropriated. Federally recognized tribes are eligible to receive tribal grant funds to support activities in communities that meet the requirements of the grant program.

5. How much money will states receive?

EPA will award approximately \$42.8 million in grant funds to eligible entities. The amount of funding available to states will be based on an allocation formula similar to that of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

6. What is considered an eligible project?

Grants can be used to support projects and activities in underserved, small and disadvantaged communities that include:

- Investments necessary for a public water system to comply with the SDWA
- Assistance that directly and primarily benefits a disadvantaged community

- Programs to provide household water quality testing, including testing for unregulated contaminants
- Activities necessary and appropriate for a State to respond to a contaminant

Example project and activity categories are:

- Treatment
- Transmission and Distribution
- Storage
- Consolidation
- Household water quality testing, including for unregulated contaminants
- Assistance to increase technical, managerial, and financial capacity

7. What is considered a small or disadvantaged community?

For the purposes of this Grant Program, a disadvantaged community is one determined by the state to be disadvantaged under the affordability criteria established by the State under section 1452(d)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act, or may become a disadvantaged community as a result of carrying out a project or activity. A project in a small community is eligible for assistance if the community served has a population of less than 10,000 individuals and lacks the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance a project to comply with the SDWA.

8. Does the community being served by the project need to be both small and disadvantaged?

The Grant Program requires that states provide funding to underserved communities that must also meet the criteria as either a disadvantaged community or a small community that lacks the capacity to incur the debt necessary to carry out the project or activity. An “underserved community” is statutorily defined as one that:

- Does not have household drinking water or wastewater services; or
- Is served by a public water system that violates, or exceeds, as applicable, a requirement of a national primary drinking water regulation, including
 1. a maximum contaminant level;
 2. a treatment technique; and
 3. an action level.

9. How is the allocation for each state determined?

Funding will be awarded to states as an allotment based on an allocation formula similar to that of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, including a 2% tribal allotment.

10. What is the funding schedule?

The steps below outline the procedure and schedule for states to participate in the 2019 Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities Drinking Water Grant Program. Additional details will be provided with the release of the grant implementation document.

April, 2019	EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) informs states and territories of their allotments for the grant program.
September, 2019	Implementation Document and grant program criteria available to states.
September, 2019 (approximately 30 days after implementation documents posted)	Applications open on www.Grants.gov . (Prior to applying states will submit draft workplans to their respective EPA Region. EPA Regions must be able to determine from the draft workplans that activities conform to all applicable requirements of the grant.)
September 30, 2020	Deadline for participating states to submit their final application package to www.Grants.gov . Although states will have a year to apply for funds, states are encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible. Applications must indicate how the 45 percent cost share of the total project budget will be met. Funding will be awarded on a rolling basis, as applications are submitted. EPA Regional offices are the primary points of contact to approve grant applications and award funding.

Please note: This schedule is subject to change and updated information will be provided directly to states as needed.

11. What is the project length of time?

Projects will vary in the length of time to complete depending upon the type of project or activity.

12. Are there cost share requirements?

Yes, the eligible entity is required to pay not less than 45 percent of the total costs of the project or activity, which may include services, materials, supplies, or other in-kind contributions. The 45 percent cost share is waived for all tribal recipients and the "Insular

Areas", which includes the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

13. Who is required to provide the cost share?

States, as the receiving entity, are the entities required to provide the 45% cost share. States may require some cost share from the communities receiving the assistance; however, consideration should be given to the fact that the purpose of this program is to assist communities with limited financial capacity. The non-federal cost share may be provided as cash or as in-kind resources, such as use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., and is subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements described in 2 CFR 200.306, as applicable. In-kind resources often include, and are not limited to, salaries or other verifiable costs.

14. Can DWSRF funds be used for the required cost share?

No DWSRF funds will be considered as cost share for the Grant Program, including federal capitalization grants, state match, principal repayments, interest earnings, fees, or leveraged funds. State services, materials, supplies, or other in-kind contributions are eligible to be considered towards the 45% cost share requirement.

15. How will projects be prioritized for funding?

The Grant Program requires prioritizing the use of program funds to projects and activities that benefit underserved communities. An underserved community is one that has an inadequate system for obtaining drinking water, including a community that does not have household drinking water or wastewater services or that is served by a public water system that violates or exceeds a requirement of a national primary drinking water regulation. To receive a Grant Program award, states will maintain a list that identifies eligible projects or activities for potential funding. States will consult with EPA regional offices on their project and activity lists prior to final selection and award of funding.

16. How much funding is available for the Grant Program?

EPA will award approximately \$42.8 million for the Grant Program for 2019. In accordance with 1459A of the SDWA, the Grant Program is authorized to be appropriated \$60 million for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021. Actual funding levels are subject to the availability of appropriations.

17. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

You may send additional questions to WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov.

18. If I'm a local community within a state, how do I access this funding?

September 5, 2019

Communities will apply to their respective state program for assistance. EPA will provide a webpage with state contacts once they become available. Please check back at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-grants> .