



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Pacific Southwest / Region 9

# Tribal Water Infrastructure Program

Water Division  
Tribal Water Section • October 2020

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866-EPA-WEST • [www.epa.gov/region9](http://www.epa.gov/region9)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 provides annual funding opportunities for federally recognized tribal governments to support drinking water infrastructure and basic sanitation needs. Outlined below is information about our water infrastructure programs, eligibility and funding. All selection criteria include public health as a high priority.

## Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside Program

The Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside Program (DWTSA) provides annual funding for federally recognized tribes for public drinking water systems. DWTSA funds come from a 2% set-aside of the Safe Drinking Water Act State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program. EPA's 2021 request for proposals is available at [www.epa.gov/tribal/region-9-drinking-water-tribal-set-aside-program](http://www.epa.gov/tribal/region-9-drinking-water-tribal-set-aside-program). The current solicitation closes on **November 20, 2020**.

The highest priority projects are selected for funding based on public health ranking criteria. Funds are awarded through direct grants to federally recognized tribes or via interagency agreements with the U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS). Funding levels have ranged between \$40,000 and \$2 million per project. In FY20, EPA Region 9 funded approximately \$11 million in drinking water infrastructure projects.

## Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Program

The Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Program (CWISA) provides annual funding for federally recognized tribes for planning, design and construction of wastewater infrastructure projects. CWISA funds come from a 2% set-aside of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF).

To apply for funding, tribes must first contact their IHS Area Office ([www.ihs.gov/dsfc/staff](http://www.ihs.gov/dsfc/staff)) to determine if their wastewater needs are eligible to be entered into the IHS Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) list, which identifies current sanitation deficiencies for existing tribal homes. The program is not competitive, and matching funds are not required. The funds are awarded annually, based on the wastewater project needs listed on the SDS list, through interagency agreements with the IHS or direct grants to federally recognized tribes. Average funding levels have been approximately \$300,000 per project.

## Tribal Border Infrastructure Program

The Tribal Border Infrastructure (TBI) Program provides funding to federally recognized tribes to address high-priority drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs of tribes whose reservations are within 62 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border.



*Newly installed meter and meter vault for the White Mountain Apache Tribe.*

### Eligible DWTSA Activities Include:

- Projects that achieve compliance with national primary drinking water standards
- Water treatment plants
- New sources of drinking water
- Storage tanks and distribution systems

### Ineligible Activities Include:

- Operations and maintenance (O&M)
- Monitoring
- Land acquisition
- Dams

### Eligible CWISA Activities Include:

- Interceptor sewers
- Wastewater treatment facilities
- Infiltration/inflow correction

### Ineligible Activities Include:

- Operations and maintenance (O&M)
- Emergency repairs

## Completed CWISA Project: Sells Sewer Main/Lagoon Upgrade

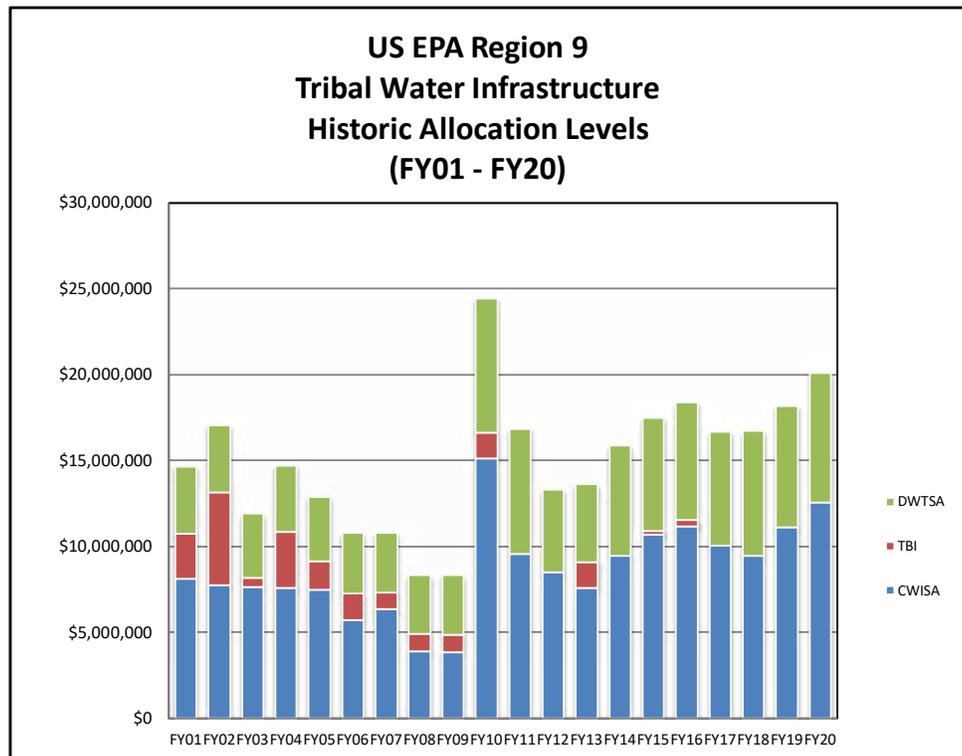
EPA collaborated with IHS and the Tohono O’odham Nation to upgrade the Sells wastewater system, serving 3,500 people. The existing system was returned to a traditional facultative wastewater lagoon, eliminating clogging and surcharging. To increase capacity, treatment cells were expanded from 17 to 28 acres, and 3,300 feet of sewer main replaced. Completed in April 2020, the \$4.8million project was jointly funded by EPA’s CWISA program and IHS’s SFC program.



*Rehabilitated treatment cell back in use for the Tohono O’odham Nation.*

## Completed DWTSA Project: Flow Meter Installation and Vault Upgrades for Arsenic Compliance

EPA provided \$351,000 for the White Mountain Apache Tribe to address elevated arsenic levels in Whiteriver’s water system. The Tribe installed 11 new electromagnetic flow meters and meter vaults at wellheads to limit arsenic entering the system. Completed in 2020, the project benefits 2,551 homes, plus schools, tribal offices and businesses.



### EPA Program Contacts

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