



Region 9 Drinking Water Emerging Contaminant Tribal Grant Programs

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EPA has two new grant programs for federally recognized tribes: the Drinking Water Tribal Set Aside Emerging Contaminants Program and the Emerging Contaminants in Small and Disadvantaged Communities Program. These programs fund infrastructure improvements, planning, and technical assistance to address emerging contaminants in drinking water. Information about the two programs, project eligibilities, and project examples are outlined below.

What is an emerging contaminant in drinking water?

- An emerging contaminant in drinking water is a contaminant for which EPA has not established a National Primary Drinking Water Rule (NPDWR) and is listed on one of EPA's Contaminant Candidate List as a priority for future regulatory determinations.
- While EPA expects to establish a NPDWR for certain PFAS analytes, projects that address PFAS will remain eligible for funding under these programs.
- You can view the most recent Contaminant Candidate List [here](#):



How do I apply for funding?

- Please submit a project proposal by email by no later than **November 30, 2023**
- Application materials and guidance can be found [here](#):

How are projects selected for funding?

Region 9 developed a separate project ranking criteria to prioritize project selection under these new programs. Region 9 prioritizes projects that address PFAS and contaminants where the agency has established a health advisory. This ranking process is described here, on [page 40](#):



What are eligible project types?

Eligible project examples for both programs include:

- Completing pre-development activities, including construction design.
- Conducting initial monitoring to establish baseline contaminant levels.
- Technical assistance.
- Activities necessary and appropriate for tribes to respond to an emerging contaminant.
- Installing centralized water treatment.
- Consolidation and constructing a new water source.

Additionally, the EC-SDC Program can fund:

- Laboratory testing equipment such as supplying water test kits and instructions to households.
- Source water protection activities.

Example Projects in Region 9

- Projects funded in Region 9 have addressed contamination from manganese and cyanotoxins. EPA has established health advisory levels for both manganese and certain cyanotoxins in drinking water.

- EPA awarded funding to perform ice pigging to remove manganese buildup in a tribal utility’s distribution system (Fig 1). Manganese is naturally occurring throughout the United States, but manganese contamination is most common within alluvial plains like central California, and northern Nevada. Manganese contamination often occurs where there is iron and can occur in groundwater or surface water.
- EPA provided funding to a tribal utility to investigate treatment alternatives to remove cyanotoxins from their water supply. Cyanotoxins from harmful algal blooms (Fig 2) can occur in systems that rely on surface water and may spike seasonally.



Fig 1: Manganese contaminants leaving a water system following ice pigging.



Fig 2: Blue-green algal bloom accumulating in a surface water system.

Can I apply for funding to do sampling or investigative work?

Yes this program can fund sampling projects for any emerging contaminant. If you are interested in sampling for PFAS, we encourage you to participate in EPA Region 9’s [free PFAS sampling program](#):



How much funding is available?

The region expects to award a combined \$14 million for these two programs in 2024.

What are the eligible entities to receive funding?

- Entities for both programs must be generally Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside (DWTSA) eligible.
- The EC-SDC program eligibility is limited to communities with populations below 10,000 individuals.
- You can view DWTSA eligibility [here](#):



How is funding awarded?

Funds are generally awarded through direct grants to tribes or inter-agency agreements with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and for certain projects Region 9 can provide EPA-directed in-kind assistance to tribes.