

## Chapter 9: Other Funding Options

### Read this chapter...

- To identify EPA and other government programs that provide funds to support tribal water quality programs.
- For examples of how Tribes have used government program funds.
- For links to find more information about government programs.

### Chapter highlights:

- At-a-glance table of EPA tribal grant programs, how to qualify for each, and their connection to the Section 106 Program.
- List of other EPA grant programs and tribal project examples.
- Links to other non-EPA federal grant programs that may be relevant to tribal water quality programs.

Section 106 funding supports each Tribe's ability to manage and improve water quality. As water quality programs identify other needs, such as implementing best management practices (BMPs), Tribes will need to identify additional funding and resources. This chapter gives examples of government programs that provide technical and financial assistance to support tribal water quality programs.

It is important for water quality programs to define their program goals before seeking funding, technical assistance, and partnerships. Clearly established goals allow Tribes to pursue the opportunities that are best suited to meet their needs.

Tribes should consider applying for additional funding programs in coordination with other tribal departments and external partners that share priorities. For example, Tribes may coordinate with public works and transportation departments for trash reduction in waters or with tribal air quality programs for climate change planning efforts. Tribes can learn more about these programs and determine the best way to leverage funding options by contacting their EPA regional office.

#### Explore and Apply for Federal Funding at [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov)

Grant opportunities available across the federal government are posted on [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). This website allows users to sign up to receive e-mail alerts about new grant opportunities in relevant areas.

Table 12. EPA funding programs at-a-glance

<b>General Assistance Program Grants (Assistance Listing #: 66.926)</b>	
Program Description	<p>Assistance to Tribes and intertribal consortia to build tribal capacity to administer environmental regulatory programs and provide technical assistance in the development of multimedia programs. Supports activities such as planning, developing, and establishing the capability to implement programs that EPA administers, including to develop and implement solid and hazardous waste programs.</p> <p>For more information, visit: <a href="#">Indian Environmental General Assistance Program</a></p>
How it Works with Section 106	<p>Tribes can use General Assistance Program (GAP) funding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an initial Section 106 grant application or a treatment in a similar manner as a state (TAS) application.</li> <li>• Establish a Section 106 grant management program.</li> <li>• Conduct capacity building activities (for example, participate in training opportunities, develop Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs), develop a Monitoring Strategy).</li> <li>• Expand water quality program activities (for example, TAS packages for water quality standards (WQS), listing and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), Section 319).</li> </ul>
Tribal Eligibility	Federally recognized Tribes and intertribal consortia.
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$75,000/year or more, depending on allocation formula.</li> <li>• No match required.</li> </ul>
<b>Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grants (Assistance Listing #: 66.460)</b>	
Program Description	<p>Assistance to states, Tribes, and intertribal consortia for implementing Nonpoint Source (NPS) Programs.</p> <p>For more information, visit: <a href="#">Tribal Nonpoint Source Program</a></p>
How it Works with Section 106	<p>Tribes can use Section 106 funds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the NPS Assessment Report and NPS Management Program.</li> <li>• Conduct monitoring and assessment work to identify NPS pollution problems and threats.</li> <li>• Develop non-structural controls to reduce NPS pollution.</li> <li>• Form partnerships to address NPS issues.</li> <li>• Conduct watershed-based planning.</li> <li>• Conduct water quality monitoring to determine effectiveness of NPS BMPs.</li> </ul>
Tribal Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federally recognized Tribes that meet the criteria in CWA Section 518(e) and intertribal consortia.</li> <li>• TAS for Section 319 is required, including an EPA-approved NPS Assessment Report and NPS Management Plan.</li> </ul>
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base Grants: \$36,000 or \$60,000/year, depending on tribal land area.</li> <li>• Competitive Grants: Up to \$125,000/project for water quality protection or restoration projects.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 percent match; can be reduced to 10 percent match with demonstration of hardship.</li> <li>• No match required if funds are included in a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG).</li> </ul>
<b>Section 104(b)(3) Wetlands Program Development Grants</b> <b>(Assistance Listing #: 66.461)</b>	
Program Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance to states, Tribes, intertribal consortia, and other groups to build wetland programs. A secondary focus is to build local (county or municipal) programs.</li> <li>• Regions issue a Request for Applications (RFAs) for Tribes, states, territories, intertribal consortia, interstate agencies, and local governments every two years.</li> <li>• EPA Headquarters (HQ) and regions issue tribal-only RFAs every two years.</li> </ul> <p>For more information, visit: <a href="#">Wetland Program Development Grant</a></p>
How it Works with Section 106	<p>Tribes can use Section 106 funds to support and implement wetland program activities, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify wetlands.</li> <li>• Monitor wetlands.</li> <li>• Implement a Wetlands Program.</li> <li>• Develop a Section 404 dredge and fill permit program.</li> <li>• Implement a dredge and fill permit program.</li> </ul>
Tribal Eligibility	Federally recognized Tribes and intertribal consortia.
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive grants: Funding at the regional level ranges from \$50,000 to \$550,000 per award.</li> <li>• 25 percent match.</li> <li>• No match required if funds are included in a PPG.</li> </ul>
<b>Exchange Network Grants</b> <b>(Assistance Listing #: 66.608)</b>	
Program Description	<p>The Exchange Network (EN) Grant Program provides funding to help Tribes develop the information management and technology capabilities they need to participate in the EN.</p> <p>For more information, visit: <a href="#">Exchange Network Grant Program</a></p>
How it Works with Section 106	<p>Tribes can use EN funds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish data storage and retrieval systems for water quality data.</li> <li>• Establish data flow to Water Quality Exchange (WQX).</li> </ul>
Tribal Eligibility	Federally recognized Tribes and intertribal consortia.
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive Grants: Eligible Tribes received from \$130,000 to \$400,000 per award in 2020.</li> <li>• No match required.</li> </ul>
<b>Clean Water State Revolving Funds</b> <b>(Assistance Listing #: 66.458)</b>	
Program Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program is a federal-state partnership that provides communities low-cost financing for a wide range of wastewater infrastructure projects.</li> </ul>

Clean Water Act Section 106 Tribal Guidance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tribes are eligible to apply for state funds and should contact the appropriate state agency for information on the program.</li> </ul> <p>For more information, visit: <a href="#">Clean Water State Revolving Fund</a></p>
How it Works with Section 106	<p>Tribes may be eligible to use CWSRF to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct, upgrade, repair, or replace community decentralized wastewater systems.</li> <li>• Set up a special district or Responsible Management Entity for management of decentralized systems.</li> <li>• Implement a watershed-based plan and watershed pilot projects.</li> <li>• Implement an NPS management plan.</li> <li>• Implement riparian buffers.</li> <li>• Restore habitat.</li> <li>• Develop public outreach materials.</li> </ul>
Tribal Eligibility	Tribes may be eligible for CWSRF loans. Specific eligibilities vary by state.
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	Funding ranges and match requirements vary by state.
<b>Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (Assistance Listing #: 66.468)</b>	
Program Description	<p>The Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) is a federal-state partnership that distributes funds to states to provide low-interest loans to eligible recipients for drinking water infrastructure projects. DWSRF also allows states to set-aside a portion of their funds to finance source water protection activities.</p> <p>For more information, visit: <a href="#">Drinking Water State Revolving Fund</a></p>
How it Works with Section 106	<p>Tribes may be eligible to use DWSRF to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement source water protection activities.</li> <li>• Acquire land or conservation easements to protect source water.</li> </ul>
Tribal Eligibility	Tribes may be eligible for DWSRF loans. Specific eligibilities vary by state.
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	Funding ranges and match requirements vary by state.
<b>EPA Geographic Programs</b>	
Program Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPA Geographic Programs include Puget Sound, Columbia River, Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound, Lake Pontchartrain, S. New England Estuary, South Florida, and San Francisco Bay.</li> <li>• Tribes can monitor <a href="#">Grants.gov</a> for requests for proposals from these programs.</li> </ul>
How it Works with Section 106	Tribes can use EPA Geographic Program funds to support and expand Section 106-funded activities, such as those that improve knowledge and protect and restore critical aquatic ecosystems.
Tribal Eligibility	Tribal eligibility may vary by Geographic Program.
Grant Funding and Match Requirement	Funding amount and match requirements may vary by Geographic Program.

## EPA Tribal Grant Programs

This section provides more detail on EPA funding sources that tribal programs commonly pursue.

### General Assistance Program Grants

- Assistance Listing #: 66.460.
- Statutory Authority: Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Act.

#### ***Program Description***

The Indian Environmental GAP provides grants to Indian tribal governments or intertribal consortia to support activities such as planning, developing, and establishing environmental protection programs consistent with other applicable provisions of law providing for enforcement of such laws by Indian Tribes on Indian lands. The purposes of GAP funding are to:

1. Provide general assistance grants to Indian tribal governments and intertribal consortia to build capacity to administer environmental regulatory programs that EPA may delegate on Indian lands.
2. Provide technical assistance from EPA to Indian tribal governments and intertribal consortia in the development of multimedia programs to address environmental issues on Indian lands.
3. Develop and implement solid and hazardous waste programs.

EPA's [GAP Guidance on Financial Assistance Agreements](#) has more information.

#### ***How to Qualify***

Federally recognized Tribes and tribal consortia interested in planning, developing, and establishing environmental protection programs in Indian Country, and developing and implementing solid and hazardous waste programs on tribal lands, can submit applications for funding to their EPA region. Tribes and consortia are required to have an EPA-Tribal Environmental Plan (ETEP) in place. If they do not have an ETEP, their GAP work plan should include a commitment to develop one.

#### ***Funding Amount***

The Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Act states that each grant that EPA awards for general assistance for a fiscal year shall be no less than \$75,000, and EPA may not award a single grant to an Indian tribal government or intertribal consortium for more than 10 percent of the funds appropriated.

#### ***Match Requirements***

None.

#### ***Connections with the Section 106 Program***

GAP funding can help Tribes build capacity for water related environmental programs and develop TAS applications. Capacity development activities include participating in water quality training; developing a QAPP, initial Monitoring Strategy, and water quality database; and building capacity for CWA authorities including to develop TAS packages, WQS, and assessment methodologies.

#### ***Examples of GAP-Funded Activities***

The GAP program can support tribal environmental program work in the following areas: water, air, solid waste, pesticides, emergency response, border issues, land use, and regulatory actions.

Hoh Indian Tribe

The Hoh Indian Tribe of western Washington has called the Hoh River watershed home since time immemorial. The 1.5-square mile Hoh Indian Reservation sits adjacent to the mouth of the Hoh River on the Olympic Peninsula. The river originates from glacial terminuses on Mount Olympus in the Olympic National Park, flowing 56 miles from its headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. As it travels westward, the river flows through one of the largest temperate rainforests in the United States. Due to the prolific nature of the forest, logging is pervasive in the watershed outside of the Olympic National Park. Many native fish species reside in the Hoh River and its tributaries, including runs of steelhead, chinook, coho, pink, and chum salmon. The Hoh Indian Tribe depends on healthy populations of these fish for their cultural, ecological, and economic values.

In 2005, the Tribe established the Hoh River Watershed Monitoring Program to monitor water quality in the Hoh River and its tributaries with support from GAP. At the time of the monitoring program's inception, water quality data were largely lacking for the Hoh River watershed. There were no long-term monitoring programs for the area outside of the Olympic National Park and little was known about the effects of timber harvest on water quality and salmon habitat in the Hoh River and its tributaries. The Hoh River Watershed Monitoring Program was created to: 1) establish baseline conditions of water quality, 2) document changes from baseline conditions, and 3) monitor for compliance with relevant regulatory standards. The program monitors the following water quality parameters: instantaneous temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO), turbidity, conductivity, and pH; continuous temperature and DO; and summer low flow in tributaries.

Over the years, the Tribe expanded their water quality program with GAP by incorporating new core capacities, such as developing a water quality Monitoring Strategy, submitting and routinely updating a Quality Assurance Project Plan, developing an EPA-TEP, enhancing staff expertise through training opportunities, and adding baseline environmental data by incorporating new tributaries into the monitoring network. After building the capacity of the monitoring program through GAP, the Tribe received TAS for the Section 106 Program in 2021. With support from GAP and Section 106 grants, the Hoh River Watershed Monitoring Program will continue to enhance water quality monitoring efforts, thereby striving for protection of the waters that are integral to the longevity of salmon and the Hoh Indian Tribe's way of life.

Figure 19. South Fork of the Hoh River during autumn. Credit: Photo courtesy of the Hoh Indian Tribe



### **Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grants**

- Assistance Listing #: 66.460.
- Statutory Authority: CWA Section 319.

#### ***Program Description***

The Section 319 NPS Program provides grants and technical assistance to Tribes, states, and territories to support the control of NPS pollution. NPS water pollution comes from diffuse sources, including agricultural lands, failing septic systems, developed lands, and other runoff that does not come from a discrete source, such as a pipe. The NPS Program also supports restoration actions to reverse hydromodification and habitat loss. Across the United States, NPS pollution is a major contributor to water quality problems. EPA's [Polluted Runoff: Nonpoint Source \(NPS\) Pollution](#) website has more information.

#### ***How to Qualify***

Tribes must apply for TAS for the NPS Program. Tribes interested in TAS for NPS are encouraged to work with their EPA regions and submit a draft NPS Assessment Report and NPS Management Program Plan for review and approval before submitting a TAS application. Developing the NPS Assessment Report and NPS Management Program Plan can be a lengthy process and Tribes might need to submit multiple drafts before the EPA region can approve the documents. These documents serve as the foundation for how Tribes implement their NPS Program. To qualify for Section 319 grants TAS, Tribes must demonstrate that they meet the CWA Section 518(e) TAS criteria and have an approved NPS Assessment Report and NPS Management Program Plan. For details on 319 TAS process, Tribes should consult EPA's [Handbook for Developing and Managing Tribal Nonpoint Source Pollution Programs Under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act](#). Tribes should also contact their EPA regional Tribal NPS Coordinator for region-specific information.

#### ***Funding Amount***

Tribal NPS grants are for \$36,000 or \$60,000 per year, depending on a Tribe's land area. Tribes with TAS for NPS can apply for these base program amounts annually. EPA also conducts a national tribal Section 319 grant competition each year, where Tribes can apply for funds for on-the-ground, "implementation" projects. Tribes can apply for up to \$125,000 in competitive tribal Section 319 funding.

#### ***Match Requirements***

Section 319 has a 40 percent tribal match requirement based on the total amount of the approved work plan. For example, a Tribe submitting a \$50,000 work plan will receive a \$30,000 NPS grant and will match that grant at \$20,000. Tribes can request a financial hardship regulatory exception to reduce the 40 percent match to 10 percent. Tribes should consult with their EPA regional office for specifics on requesting match regulatory exceptions. To receive a regulatory exception, Tribes typically provide documentation of a hardship, such as the Tribe's per capita income or unemployment rate in comparison to the state or local area.

EPA waived the required cost share when Section 319 funds are included in PPGs for new funding awarded or supplemental amendments to tribal or intertribal PPGs awarded on or after October 1, 2021. More information is in Chapter 3: Grant Requirements.

### **Connections with the Section 106 Program**

Tribes can use Section 106 funds to support a range of NPS activities, such as developing the NPS Assessment Report and NPS Management Program Plan and conducting NPS effectiveness monitoring.

### **Examples of Section 319-Funded Activities**

Depending on the Tribe's NPS management program, grants may be available to fund activities such as:

- Replacing, constructing, upgrading, or repairing failing septic systems to protect source water.
- Installing BMPs to reduce soil erosion near roads.
- Developing a watershed-based plan to guide NPS management work.
- Protecting or restoring wetlands to manage NPS pollution.

### **Section 104(b)(3) Wetlands Program Development Grants**

- Assistance Listing #: 66.461.
- Statutory Authority: CWA Section 104(b)(3).

### **Program Description**

Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) assist tribal, state, territorial, and local government agencies, as well as intertribal and interstate entities, in developing or refining programs which protect, manage, and restore wetlands. The secondary focus is to develop or refine programs for local entities, such as counties or municipalities.

Wetland programs help conserve and restore wetland acreage and improve wetland condition. The grant recipients use one or more of the primary activities, known as Core Elements, to achieve this goal. Core Elements include the following:

- Monitoring and assessment.
- Voluntary restoration and protection.
- Regulatory approaches (including Section 401 certification).
- Wetland-specific WQS.

### **How to Qualify**

Tribes do not need TAS to apply for WPDGs. WPDGs are competitive grants and EPA regions issue regional RFAs every two years for projects that can last for four years from time of award. EPA regions usually issue the announcement in the spring of odd numbered years. Tribes should follow the application requirements listed in the RFA. The RFA includes two tracks:

- Track One or the Wetland Program Plan Track is for Tribes, states, and local governments that have or are developing/refining a Wetlands Program Plan.
- Track Two or the Non-Wetland Program Plan Track is open to intertribal consortia and states, as well as local governments, interstate agencies, and eligible colleges and universities that are agencies of a state government.

### **Funding Amount**

- Approximately \$25,000 to \$550,000 for the regional RFAs.
- From \$25,000 to \$250,000 in the tribal-only RFA.

### **Match Requirements**

Individual WPDGs have a 25 percent match requirement.



EPA waived the required cost share when WPDGs are included in PPGs for new funding awarded or supplemental amendments to tribal or intertribal PPGs awarded on or after October 1, 2021. More information is in Chapter 3: Grant Requirements.

### ***Connections with the Section 106 Program***

Tribes can use Section 106 grant funds for the following wetlands-related activities:

- Identify wetlands.
- Monitor wetlands.
- Develop and implement wetland programs.
- Develop Section 404 dredge and fill permit programs.
- Implement dredge and fill permit programs.

### ***Examples of WPDG-Funded Activities***

- Develop an inventory of wetlands on tribal lands.
- Develop a Wetland Protection Program.

### ***Other Considerations***

Tribes cannot use WPDGs for implementation. EPA intends for Tribes to use WPDGs to develop or refine wetland programs. Therefore, ongoing, routine activities, such as managing a Section 401 program would not qualify for funding. Additionally, these funds cannot be used to purchase land or easements.

In addition to the EPA regional RFA, EPA HQ also issues a tribal-only RFA every other year. Tribes interested in applying should follow the directions in the tribal-only RFA. Tribes can apply for both the HQ RFA as well as the regional RFA, using the same proposal.

### **Exchange Network Grants**

- Assistance Listing #: 66.608.
- Statutory Authority: Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1970, 84 Stat. 2086, as amended by PL 98–80, 97 Stat. 485 (codified at Title 5, App.) (EPA’s organic statute).

### ***Program Description***

The EN is an information network that facilitates environmental data sharing among EPA, Tribes, states, and territories. The EN streamlines data collection and exchange and increases data quality and access. Ultimately, this supports decision making on environmental and health issues. The EN grant program provides funds for Tribes and intertribal consortia to develop the information management and technology capabilities they need to participate in the EN. This includes funding for specific program data enhancements such as WQX and ATTAINS.

### ***How to Qualify***

Tribes must be federally recognized to qualify for EN grants. Tribal consortia, tribal councils (on behalf of two or more tribal environmental or health agencies), and tribal water quality administrations that consist of federally recognized Tribes can also apply for EN grants.

### ***Funding Amount***

Typically, EPA expects that most awards will range from \$50,000 to \$200,000. Individual opportunity applicants may request up to \$200,000, while partnership opportunity applicants may request up to \$400,000.

**Match Requirements**

The EN grant program does not have a match requirement.

**Connections with the Section 106 Program**

Tribes can use EN grants to establish data storage and retrieval systems for the water quality data they gather using Section 106 funds. Tribes can also use EN grants to establish data flow to WQX to load the water quality data they gather using Section 106 funds.

**Examples of Activities**

Example activities that Tribes can fund with EN grants include:

- Mapping data systems to WQX schema and collaborating with eligible entities collecting monitoring data.
- Developing Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC) checks and reports to improve data consistency.
- Developing capability for integrating WQX and Assessment and TMDL Tracking and Implementation System (ATTAINS) workflows and making use of monitoring data for automated water quality analyses.

EPA’s [Previous Exchange Network Grant Projects](#) website has a list of projects, including many tribal projects, that EPA has awarded.

**Other Considerations**

Tribes may consider joining the Tribal Exchange Group to address issues involving data management, technology access, and information exchange. The [Tribes and the Exchange Network](#) website has more information and updated resources on open grant solicitation.

<p style="text-align: center;">Dry Creek Band of Pomo Indians</p> <p>The Dry Creek Band of Pomo Indians in Region 9 received \$200,000 from the EN in 2021 to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a strategic plan for collecting, managing, and assessing data and making the best use of available technology to support water quality monitoring of the Tribe's resources.</li><li>• Develop, test, and implement the electronic discharge monitoring report (eDMR) system within a tribal environment.</li><li>• Develop websites, including website content and user tools, to inform the public of critical environmental projects undertaken or issues monitored.</li><li>• Develop and implement innovative geospatial tools and technologies to improve monitoring, reporting, data visualization, and analysis of environmental and public health.</li></ul>
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**Clean Water State Revolving Funds**

EPA’s [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) program is a federal-state partnership that provides communities with low-cost financing for water quality infrastructure projects. State CWSRF programs provide eligible recipients loans to construct municipal wastewater facilities, control NPS pollution, build decentralized wastewater treatment systems, repair or replace failing decentralized systems, create green infrastructure projects, protect estuaries, and fund other water quality projects. Each state’s

CWSRF program is responsible for selecting the projects that receive assistance. Tribes are eligible to apply for state funds and should contact the appropriate state agency for information on this program. EPA's [State CWSRF Program Contacts](#) website has contact information for states' CWSRF representatives along with links to states' CWSRF websites. The CWSRF program offers a variety of types of financial assistance that can fund projects that do not fall within the mainstream of traditional wastewater infrastructure. EPA's [Financing Options for Nontraditional Eligibilities in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Programs](#), [Financing Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems](#), and [CWSRF Best Practices Guide for Financing Nonpoint Source Solutions](#) documents have more information.

#### The Yurok Tribe

The Yurok Tribe received an \$18.7 million loan at zero percent interest. This loan, provided by California CWSRF, allowed the Tribe to acquire 22,237 acres of forestland to protect water quality and beneficial uses. Sustainable harvesting practices generated carbon credits, a partial repayment source. The California CWSRF required the Tribe to provide a contract for the sale of carbon reserves as a condition to receive funding. EPA's [Funding Land Conservation Projects with the Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) factsheet has more information.

#### Drinking Water State Revolving Funds

EPA's [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#) program is a financial assistance program that provides loans for infrastructure projects that protect public health. Projects may include those to improve drinking water treatment, fix leaky or old pipes for water distribution, improve sources of water supply, and replace or construct finished water storage tanks. Tribes can apply to states for funds to implement source water protection activities and acquire land or conservation easements to protect source water.

#### Other EPA Programs

In addition to the EPA grant programs above that are specifically for Tribes or have established tribal set-asides, there are several other EPA programs that provide financial and technical assistance that may be relevant to tribal water programs.

#### BEACH Act Grants

EPA awards grants under authority of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act to eligible Tribes, states, and territories that have oceans, or Great Lakes recreation waters, that are designated for primary contact use with EPA-approved WQS. BEACH Act funds can help establish or supplement water quality monitoring and public notification activities. Specifically, tribal, state, local health and environmental protection agencies, and other local authorities use BEACH Act funds to monitor beach water quality during each swimming season. When bacteria levels in the water are too high, these entities notify the public of unsafe swimming conditions by either posting beach warnings or closing the beach.

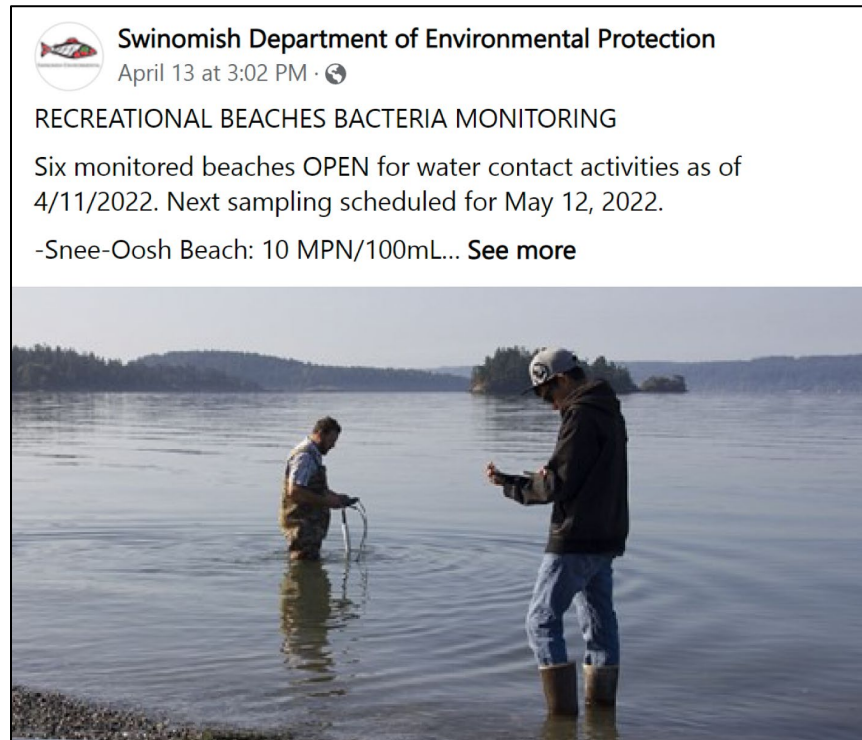
EPA allocates the BEACH Act grants using a formula based on the length of the beach season, number of miles of shoreline, and population of coastal counties. There are currently four eligible Tribes, each receiving approximately \$50,000 per year.

EPA's [Beach Grants](#) website has more information.

Swinomish Department of Environmental Protection

The Swinomish Department of Environmental Protection conducts bacteria monitoring along their recreational beaches using BEACH Act funds. They update their community on their monitoring activities, as shown in a post to their Twitter account (Figure 20).

Figure 20. A post to Twitter by the Swinomish Department of Environmental Protection



### National Estuary Program

EPA's [National Estuary Program](#) (NEP) is a non-regulatory, place-based program designed to protect and restore water quality and ecological integrity in estuaries that EPA designates as having national significance. There are currently 28 NEPs across the United States, located along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, and Puerto Rico. Each of the 28 NEPs focuses within a study area that includes the estuary and surrounding watershed. A Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) guides NEP priorities and actions to address challenges to water quality, living resources that are found in or use estuaries, and local priorities. EPA provides annual funding, national guidance, and technical assistance to local NEPs.

The [NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant \(CWG\) Program](#) is a competitive grant program that supports projects addressing urgent and challenging issues that threaten estuaries of national significance. Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) administers the NEP CWG Program under a cooperative agreement with EPA. RAE conducts an annual solicitation with approximately \$1 million awarded each year. Subawards range between \$75,000 and \$250,000, resulting in approximately three to ten total subawards per funding year, depending on Congressional appropriations. Tribes and intertribal

consortia are eligible applicants. Project proposals must occur in their entirety within NEP geographic areas.

#### The Lowlander Center

The Lowlander Center supports coastal and bayou lowlands (both human and natural) by honoring residents. It also supports Indigenous and diverse historic groups by helping them achieve full engagement for a resilient future. The Lowlander Center received a \$250,000 Coastal Watersheds Grant in 2020 to strengthen Louisiana's marshes by backfilling canals to reduce flood risk, protect sacred sites, and enhance tribal communities' resilience.

#### Urban Waters Program

The [Urban Waters Federal Partnership](#) seeks to connect overburdened or economically distressed urban communities with their waterways so that they become stewards for clean urban waters. Through the Partnership, communities gain economic, environmental, and social benefits. Communities also collaborate with federal agencies, state and local agencies, and community-led efforts to achieve common goals. The Partnership currently supports efforts in 20 designated Urban Waters locations in the United States.

The [Urban Waters Learning Network](#), led by a partnership between River Network and Groundwork USA, is a peer-to-peer network of people and organizations working to restore and revitalize local waterways. Pollution, economic distress, and related challenges disproportionately impact many of these waterways. Its purpose is to strengthen the effectiveness of urban waters practitioners across the country by providing them with opportunities to share experiences, exchange technical expertise, and learn about funding and technical resources available to support their work.

The [Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program](#), managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Wildlife Habitat Council, in cooperation with EPA and other partners, seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources for future generations by providing financial assistance to diverse local partnerships focused on improving water quality, watersheds, and the species and habitats they support. Awards range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 with an average size of \$35,000 and 40 to 50 grants awarded per year. Grants span from 12 to 18 months. Program grants support projects for ecological improvements along with targeted community outreach, education, and stewardship. Tribes are eligible applicants.

For a tribal project example, see the [Urban Waters and the Green-Duwamish Watershed \(Washington\)](#) website.

#### Office of Environmental Justice Grants

EPA's [Environmental Justice Small Grants \(EJSG\) program](#) supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. EPA designed the program to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks. EJSG fund one-year projects up to \$75,000, depending on the availability of funds. All projects must include activities that relate to at least one of the following qualified environmental statutes: Clean Air Act Section 103(b)(3); CWA Section 104(b)(3); Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act Section 20(a); Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act Section 203; Safe Drinking Water Act Section

1442(c)(3); Solid Waste Disposal Act Section 8001(a); or Toxic Substances Control Act Section 10(a). Federally recognized and state-recognized tribal governments, Alaska Native Villages, and tribal organizations are eligible applicants.

Penobscot Indian Nation

The Penobscot Indian Nation received an EJSG in 2019 to study mercury contamination of fish and crayfish, key components of the traditional sustenance diet of the Penobscot Indian Nation, Maine. This project provided species- and site-specific information on mercury concentrations of fish and crayfish in lakes subject to tribal sustenance fishing rights. Findings from this project are being used to inform the tribal community and to influence behavior to minimize mercury exposure during sustenance fishing. Finally, data on mercury in fish and crayfish will provide the baseline data needed to design a long-term mercury monitoring program that informs policymakers on the effectiveness of current mercury water quality regulations. Activities include sampling (approximately 500 samples of 2 to 8 species of fish and crayfish in 8 to 10 lakes), forming community forums on the project, conducting several school presentations, and developing a summary brochure and a technical report on the sampling results. For more information about past EJSG grantees, visit EPA's [Environmental Justice Small Grants Program – Grant Recipients](#) website.

**EPA Geographic Programs**

[Gulf of Mexico Division](#): The Gulf of Mexico Division (GMD) is a non-regulatory program focused on 1) assisting Tribes, states, interstate agencies, and other public or nonprofit organizations in developing, implementing, and demonstrating innovative approaches relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution; and 2) expanding and strengthening cooperative efforts to restore and protect the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico in ways consistent with the economic well-being of the region. The GMD utilizes competitive funding opportunities to fund projects that will deliver significant results to achieve the environmental outcomes of improved health of the Gulf of Mexico by restoring, protecting and enhancing habitat, improving water quality, enhancing community resilience, and furthering environmental education. Tribes and intertribal consortia are eligible applicants.

[Great Lakes Restoration](#): The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) accelerates efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes which is the largest system of fresh surface water in the world. Built upon the foundation of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, the multi-agency GLRI has provided funding to 16 federal organizations to address threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and to accelerate progress toward achieving long-term goals since 2010. The [GLRI Action Plan III](#) outlines the priorities and goals of the GLRI for fiscal years 2020 to 2024, which work to accelerate environmental progress in five focus areas: toxic substances and areas of concern, invasive species, NPS pollution impacts on nearshore health, habitats and species, and foundations for future restoration actions. Tribes and intertribal consortia are eligible for GLRI funding. GLRI includes the Distinct Tribal Program administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Indian Affairs under which tribal projects are supported that are consistent with GLRI goals and objectives in the spirit of self-determination, maximum flexibility, and consistent with federal Indian trust responsibilities.

[Puget Sound](#): Since 2010, Congress has appropriated over \$350 million in CWA Section 320 funds for Puget Sound. Under Section 320, EPA has provided NEP and Geographic Program funding and support to help communities make on-the-ground improvements for clean and safe water, protected and restored habitat, thriving species, and a vibrant quality of life for all, while supporting local jobs. Currently, EPA helps fund the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda for protecting and restoring Puget Sound, but federal support of Puget Sound recovery also comes from many programs. Administrators of most of these programs include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), DOI, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Funding is made available directly to Tribes from EPA Region 10 and through the Northwest Indian Fish Commission subawards.

## Other Non-EPA Federal Programs

### U.S. Department of Agriculture

The USDA provides services related to food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) website and [2016 USDA Resource Guide for American Indians and Alaska Natives](#) have more information. USDA's [Grants and Loans](#) website has information on their financial assistance programs.

- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)** offers grants to Tribes through its Conservation Partnership Initiative. NRCS staff have worked closely with many Tribes to help them identify additional funding opportunities. USDA's [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) website has more information.
- **Farm Services Agency** provides farm commodity and disaster assistance programs, as well as other forms of financial assistance. USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) website has more information.
- **U.S. Forest Service** works to maintain and improve the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of current and future generations. The Forest Service performs functions such as natural resource stewardship, management of lands and realty, and minerals and geology management. USDA's [Forest Service](#) website and [Grants & Agreements](#) website have more information.

### U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI manages and protects America's federal lands, national parks, and other resources. The [U.S. Department of the Interior](#) website has more information.

- **Bureau of Indian Affairs** within the DOI provides Water Resources on Indian Lands Grants to Tribes to assist in the management, planning, and development of their water and related land resources.
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** works to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) website and [Financial Assistance](#) website have more information.
- **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** monitors, assesses, and conducts targeted science research. USGS works in the fields of water, earth, and biological science as well as serving as a civilian mapping agency. The [USGS](#) website and [Financial Assistance](#) website have more information.

### Federal Emergency Management Agency

Nature-based solutions are increasingly recognized as important tools to mitigate disasters. EPA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are working together to align EPA water quality actions

with nature-based solutions that improve water quality and mitigate disasters. FEMA has a variety of funding programs that support the implementation of nature-based solutions. FEMA's [Mitigation Assistance Resource Guide](#) for Tribal Nations has more information.

#### **Department of Health and Human Services**

The Administration for Native Americans, within the Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services, provides Environmental Regulatory Enhancement grants to Tribes to develop tribal environmental projects that are responsive to tribal needs. The [About Environmental Regulatory Enhancement](#) website has more information.

#### **State Programs**

State agencies manage many EPA grant programs, such as the NPS Program and the State Revolving Funds program. These agencies set their own priorities and have their own procedures for providing funding. Tribes should contact the relevant state agency for specific information on whether Tribes are eligible to receive funding and what projects are eligible for funding. In addition, other state natural resources agencies, such as those related to fish and wildlife or forestry, might also provide sources of funding or opportunities to collaborate.