

Clean Water Emerging Contaminants Funding

Clean Water EC grant funding is available to federally recognized Tribes through the **Clean Water Indian Set-Aside (CWISA)**. [Learn more.](#)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law appropriated \$1 billion to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and \$20 million to the Clean Water Indian Set-Aside over five years (Fiscal Years 2022-2026) specifically to address emerging contaminants (ECs) in wastewater, stormwater, and nonpoint source pollution. Both programs offer low-cost financing and grants to communities and Tribes for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects. The funding does not require a cost-share or match.

EC funding is available entirely as grants or forgivable loans.



What is an Emerging Contaminant?

ECs refer to substances and microorganisms, including manufactured or naturally occurring physical, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials, which are known or anticipated in the environment, that may pose newly identified or re-emerging risks to human health, aquatic life, or the environment. Examples include:



- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
- Antimicrobial-resistant Bacteria
- Pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs)
- 6PPD-quinone
- Microplastics
- Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

Clean Water EC Project Case Studies

[Check out EC projects starting up around the country.](#)

[Learn more about EPA's National Recommended Water Quality Criteria.](#)

ECs are contaminants that do not have water quality criteria established by EPA under Clean Water Act section 304(a), except for PFAS. Nutrients (e.g., ammonia, nitrogen, and phosphorus), certain organics, and certain metals are not considered ECs.



What Types of Clean Water Projects are Eligible?

Planning, design, and construction activities that are eligible for the base CWSRF and CWISA program, specifically address one or more ECs, and result in a water quality benefit are eligible. Project types include:

- ✓ Laboratory and sampling equipment purchase
- ✓ Lagoon improvements and decommissioning
- ✓ Wastewater treatment (centralized & decentralized)
- ✓ Nonpoint source pollution control
- ✓ Biosolids treatment/disposal
- ✓ Stormwater management and treatment
- ✓ Septic-to-sewer conversions
- ✓ Landfill capping and leachate control
- ✓ Water reuse
- ✓ Cleanup of contaminated sites
- ✓ Source water protection
- ✓ Groundwater and surface water protection and restoration

[Click here for additional information on Clean Water EC project types that are eligible for both funding programs.](#)

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How to Establish the Presence of ECs?

For CWSRF EC funding, ECs must be identified **before** applying for CWSRF EC funding. For CWISA EC funding, identifying ECs is an eligible cost. Methods to identify ECs include:

- Traditional **sampling and analysis**.
- For **PFAS**, publicly owned treatment works (POTW) can rely on **qualitative assessments** of the upstream presence of facilities known or suspected to discharge PFAS.
- For **nonpoint sources of pollution**, such as stormwater, ECs must be identified within the **drainage area or management area**. Identification can include previously published information or data that identifies the EC within that drainage and **qualitative assessments**, including **observation** of the ECs (e.g., HABs). For further detail on eligible EC identification techniques for nonpoint source/stormwater projects, please see [FAQ 1.3](#).
 - For decentralized wastewater systems, narrative confirmation that PPCPs are expected due to widespread household use verifies the presence of PPCPs.

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What Types of Sampling, Testing, and Analysis are Eligible?

The sampling, testing, and analysis necessary for planning and designing a well-scoped project are eligible uses of EC funding. However, CWSRF EC funding can only be used to fund these activities **after** the EC is identified. These types of sampling, testing, and analysis activities should be limited to one year and occur when ECs are most likely to be present.

Eligible Activities
For POTWs that do not have an approved pretreatment program, sampling in the collection system as part of project planning and design.
Characterizing stormwater or wastewater to inform an engineering report and the identification and selection of the appropriate treatment technology/project alternatives.
Assessing nonpoint source project effectiveness after construction.
Trunkline analysis to the influent of a POTW to assess where the majority of emerging contaminant load.
Monitoring of wastewater influent, effluent, and sludge to determine the fate of ECs to inform the identification and selection of the appropriate treatment technology.

Ineligible Activities
EC identification. (ineligible use of CWSRF EC funding, but an eligible use of CWISA EC funding)
Routine monitoring.
Operating and maintenance.

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What Planning and Design Activities are Eligible?

Planning and design activities that lead to the construction of a capital project:



Connect with the Clean Water EC Team:

Web: <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/clean-water-state-revolving-fund-emerging-contaminants> | Email: cwsrfEC@epa.gov