



Region 9 Drinking Water Emerging Contaminant Tribal Grant Programs

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Pacific Southwest Region • August 2026

EPA administers two funding programs for federally recognized Tribes: The Drinking Water Tribal Set Aside Emerging Contaminants Program (DWTSA-EC) and the Emerging Contaminants in Small and Disadvantaged Communities Program (EC-SDC). These programs support infrastructure improvements, planning, design, and technical assistance to address emerging contaminants in drinking water. The region has sufficient funds to continue awarding projects in 2027.

What is an emerging contaminant in drinking water?

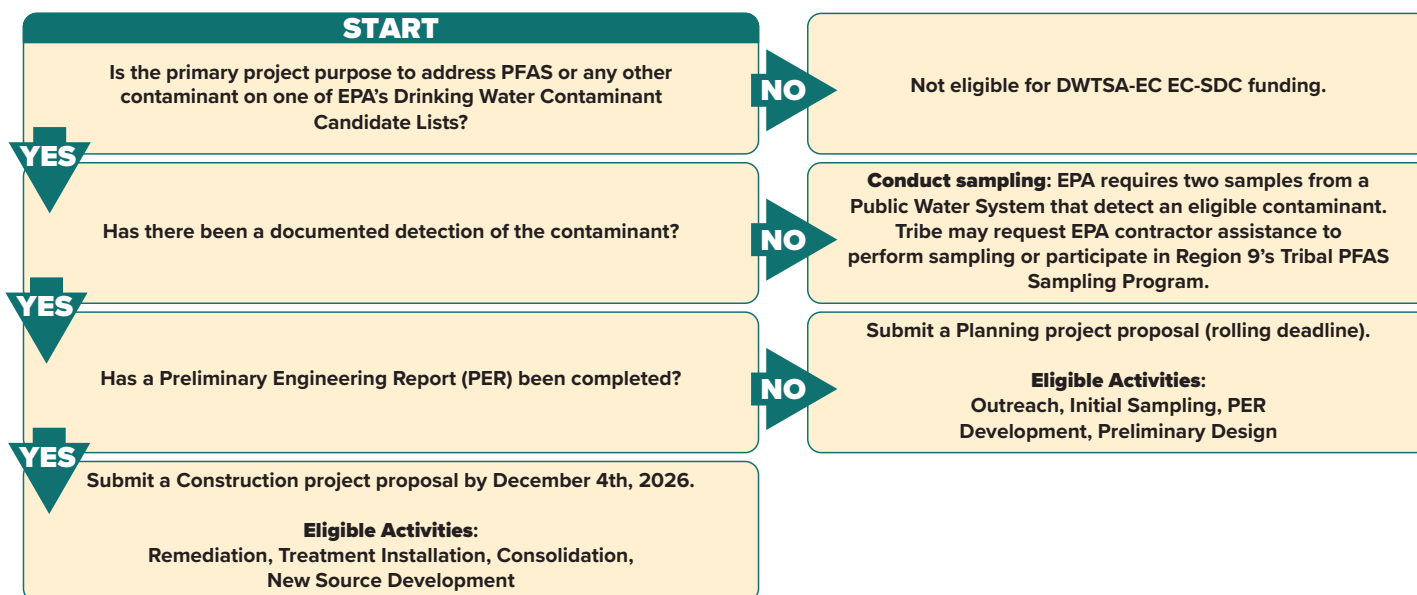
- An emerging contaminant in drinking water is a contaminant for which EPA has not established a National Primary Drinking Water Rule (NPDWR) and is listed on one of EPA's Contaminant Candidate List as a priority for future regulatory determinations.
- Projects that address Per- and Polyfluoralkyl Substances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



How do I apply for assistance?

Applications for planning projects (e.g., Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER), technical Assistance, sampling) are accepted on a rolling basis.

Construction project applications are due by email no later than December 4, 2026. A construction project must have a stamped PER to be eligible for funding. Application materials and guidance can be found [here](#):



What are eligible project types?

Eligible planning project examples include:

- Completing pre-development activities, including construction design
- Conducting initial monitoring to establish baseline contaminant levels
- Technical assistance
- Development of PERs that can support applications for funding

Eligible construction project examples include:

- Water systems consolidation.
- Installing centralized water treatment.

Example Projects in Region 9

- An EPA-directed contractor assisted a Tribe to develop a PER to explore PFAS treatment alternatives for its drinking water system. The Tribe selected anion exchange as the preferred alternative, then applied for construction funding using the PER to support the application (Fig 1).
- EPA awarded funding to perform ice pigging to remove manganese buildup in a Tribal utility's distribution system (Fig 2). The EPA has a lifetime health advisory limit for manganese of 0.3 mg/L, and a secondary Maximum Contaminant Level for manganese of 0.05 mg/L (or 50 µg/L).

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

Yes, you may apply for a direct grant or contractor assistance to conduct drinking water sampling for any eligible emerging contaminant.

If you are interested in sampling for PFAS, we encourage you to participate in EPA Region 9's [Tribal PFAS sampling program](#).



What are the eligible entities to receive funding?

Entities for both programs must be Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside (DWTSA) eligible.

- Entities must serve a Public Water System that serves a Tribe.
- The EC-SDC program eligibility is limited to communities with populations below 10,000 individuals.
- You can view detailed eligibility [here](#).

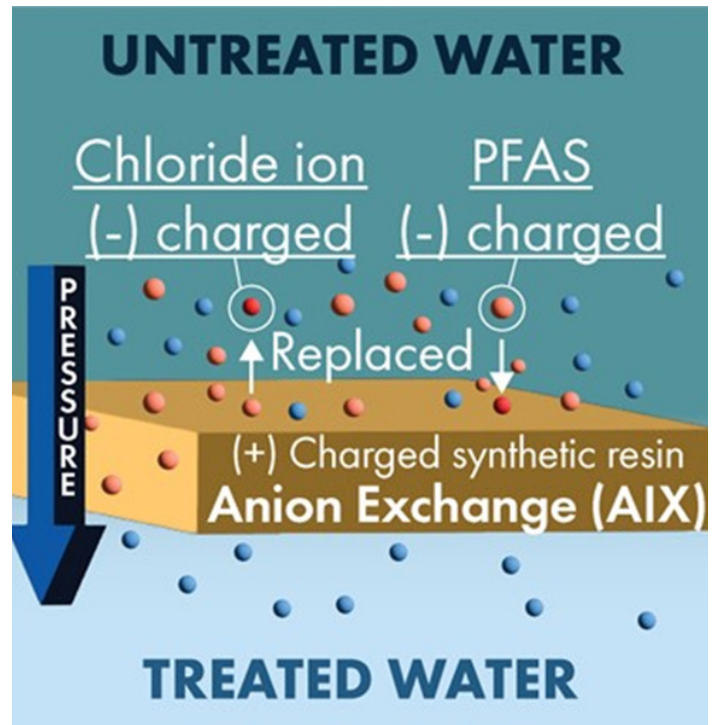


Fig 1: An schematic of anion exchange for PFAS Treatment.



Fig 2: Manganese contaminants leaving a water system following ice pigging.