

Funding Assistance in Florida for Drinking Water Systems with Excessive Lead and Copper

Background

While lead and copper are common, naturally occurring metals found throughout the environment, they seldom occur naturally in water supplies such as rivers and lakes. Most lead gets into drinking water after the water leaves the local well or treatment plant and comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These plumbing components include:

- Lead pipes and lead solder (commonly used until 1986)
- Faucets, valves, and other components made of brass

The physical and chemical interactions that occur between water and plumbing are referred to as corrosion. Corrosion contributes to the amount of lead and copper that can be released from plumbing components into drinking water.

A facility or residence may have too much lead in its drinking water because of the plumbing. The potential for lead to leach into drinking water increases with the time the water is in contact with lead plumbing. The time lead may leach into drinking water can vary between facilities. Facilities with intermittent water use may have elevated lead concentrations because the water is in contact with the plumbing components for a longer time.

Corrective Actions

To address excessive lead and copper in drinking water, corrective actions are often needed. These may include changing the source of the water supply, chemical additions at the water treatment facility, lining/coating lead service lines or lead service line replacement. The corrective actions, listed in the table below, are fixes that can be funded with a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan.

Corrective Option	Comments
Replacement of water supplies with new sources	Although the water supply may not be contaminated, it may cause heavy metals to leach into the water supply
Construction or upgrade of treatment facilities	The addition of certain chemicals to alter water chemistry will often alleviate the problem.
Lining or Coating the Lead Service Line	Options include PET linings and epoxy coatings. May be advantageous if replacement is difficult.

Lead Service Line Replacement (*Utility)	Replacement of the utility-owned Lead Service Line is usually a partial fix since the other portion of the pipe is on the homeowner's property.
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*The lead service line that is on a homeowner's property is generally the responsibility of the homeowner.

How the DWSRF Program Can Help

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program provides **low-interest** loans for planning, designing, and constructing public water facilities. The Department receives requests for funding throughout the year. The information is used to establish the project priority list for the following annual cycle. Priority is given to projects that address the most serious risks to human health, ensure compliance with federal and state drinking water regulations and assist systems most in need on a per household basis. Those that are small and financially disadvantaged may receive a grant to correct the problem.

Further, small community assistance is available for communities having populations less than 10,000.

A DWSRF loan may also serve as matching funds to supplement other sources of funding, such as grants or other loans.

For small community water systems, such as those at churches, mobile home parks, etc., emergency funding to provide treatment that reduces level of lead to below the health threshold may also be available.

For more information, please contact the DWSRF program administrator, Shanin Speas-Frost at shanin.speasfrost@dep.state.fl.us or 850-245-2991.

In addition to the DWSRF Program, there are other funding sources that may help.

Other Potential Funding Sources

1. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program** – Between \$18 and \$26 million is available annually for water and sewer projects that benefit low and moderate income persons by the CDBG program through the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. For more information, visit www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/assistance-for-governments-and-organizations/florida-small-cities-community-development-block-grant-program or contact Roger Doherty at 850.717.8417 or roger.doherty@deo.myflorida.com.



2. **Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works and Development Facilities Program** – The program, implemented through the US Dept. of Commerce, provides funding from \$100,000 to \$3 million to help distressed communities in economic decline to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. For more information, visit <http://www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities.htm> or contact Jonathan Corso at 404.730.3023 or jonathan.corso@eda.gov.
3. **Rural Development Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Guaranteed and Direct Loans and Grants** – This program provides a combination of loans and grants for water, wastewater, and solid waste projects to rural communities and small incorporated municipalities. Up to \$300,000 in grants and up to \$1 million in loans may be requested. For more information, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWEP_HomePage.html or contact Michael Langston at 352.338.3485 or michael.langston@fl.usda.gov.
4. **USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants** - This program helps eligible communities prepare for, or recover from, an emergency that threatens the availability of safe, reliable drinking water for households and businesses. Provides water transmission line grants up to \$150,000 for construction of waterline extensions, repairs to breaks or leaks in existing water distribution lines, and related maintenance necessary to replenish water supply and water source grants up to \$500,000 for construction of a new water source, intake and/or treatment facility. Applies to rural areas and towns with 10,000 or fewer people. For more information, visit <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/emergency-community-water-assistance-grants> or contact Michael Langston at 352.338.3485 or michael.langston@fl.usda.gov.
5. **Florida’s five regional water management districts (WMD)** offers financial assistance up to \$300,000 for a variety of water-related projects, for water supply development, water resource development, and surface water restoration. Assistance may be provided from *ad valorem* tax revenues or from periodic legislative appropriations. For information on funding opportunities, contact the water management district with jurisdiction in your area – see www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/watman for a map and links to each of the districts.

Note - The Florida Legislature may solicit applications directly for “Community Budget Issue Request” projects, including water projects. This process is an opportunity to secure legislative sponsorship of project funding through the state budget. The Legislature may coordinate applications with the department. You are advised to contact your local legislative representative to determine whether there are opportunities available to fund your project. Information on contacting legislators is available at www.leg.state.fl.us.

