



Water Resource Funding in Florida

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) through its Division of Water Restoration Assistance provides financial assistance to local governments and certain other entities to upgrade, expand, or build wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water facilities or implement various other water quality improvement projects.

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program** provides low-interest loans to local governments to plan, design, and build or upgrade wastewater, stormwater, and nonpoint source pollution prevention projects. Certain agricultural best management practices may also qualify for funding. Discounted assistance for small communities is available. Interest rates on loans are below market rates and vary based on the economic wherewithal of the community. Additionally, **Small Community Wastewater Facility Grants** are also available for the construction of wastewater facilities in municipalities with 10,000 or fewer people and *per capita* income levels below Florida's average *per capita* income. These grants are incorporated into and must accompany a Clean Water SRF loan and are, therefore, linked to the Clean Water SRF program. The Clean Water SRF Program is Florida's largest financial assistance program for water infrastructure. More information is available at floridadep.gov/wra/srf/content/cwsrf-program or contact Tim Banks at 850.245.2969 or Timothy.Banks@FloridaDEP.gov.
- **Drinking Water SRF Loan Program** provides low-interest loans to local governments and certain private utilities to plan, design, and build or upgrade drinking water systems. Discounted assistance for small communities may be available. Principal forgiveness (grant) may also be available for disadvantaged communities. Interest rates on loans are typically 40% below market rates. More information is available at floridadep.gov/wra/srf/content/dwsrf-program or contact Shanin Speas-Frost at 850.245.2991 or Shanin.Speasfrost@FloridaDEP.gov.
- Florida's **Section 319 Grant Program** administers funds received from EPA to implement projects or programs that reduce nonpoint sources of pollution. Projects or programs must benefit Florida's priority watersheds ("impaired waters") and local sponsors must provide at least a 40% match or in-kind contribution. Eligible activities include demonstration and evaluation of urban and agricultural stormwater best management practices, stormwater retrofits, and public education. More information is available at <https://floridadep.gov/wra/319-tmdl-fund> or contact Amanda Peck at 850.245.2952 or Amanda.Peck@FloridaDEP.gov.

- Funding for **State Water-Quality Assistance Grants** may be available through periodic legislative appropriations to the DEP. When funds are available, the program prioritizes stormwater construction projects to benefit impaired waters, somewhat along the lines of the previously mentioned Section 319 Grant Program. Information is available at <https://floridadep.gov/WRA/319-TMDL-Fund> or by contacting Amanda Peck at 850.245.2952 or Amanda.Peck@FloridaDEP.gov.

DEP is committed to marshaling resources to prepare Florida's coastal communities and habitats for the effects of climate change, especially rising sea levels. Local communities can assess their vulnerabilities to projected increases in coastal flooding and erosion and can develop strategies to make affected areas more resilient. Protecting and strengthening natural infrastructure also can help. Coral reefs, mangroves, oyster reefs and marshes are our first lines of defense. **The Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection** is committed to helping prepare Florida's communities and habitats for changes resulting from sea level rise by providing funding and technical assistance to prepare Florida's coastal communities; and continuing to promote and ensure a coordinated approach to sea-level-rise planning among state, regional and local agencies.

Through the **Florida Resilient Coastlines Program**, DEP continues its efforts to ensure collaboration among Florida's coastal communities and to offer technical assistance and funding to coastal communities dealing with increasingly complex flooding, erosion and habitat shifts. For more information, contact Whitney.Gray@FloridaDEP.gov.

The Florida Legislature may solicit applications directly for "**Community Budget Issue Request**" projects, including water projects, in anticipation of upcoming legislative sessions. This process is an opportunity to secure legislative sponsorship of project funding through the state budget. The Legislature may coordinate applications with the department. In other years, the Legislature will not solicit projects but may include them in the budget in any event. You are advised to contact your local legislative delegation to determine whether there are opportunities available to fund your project. Information on contacting Senators and Representatives is available at www.leg.state.fl.us.

There are other programs at both the state and federal levels that offer the possibility of water infrastructure funding. These include:

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO):

- **Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Program (RCDRL)** was created by the 1996 Legislature to facilitate the use of existing federal, state, and local financial resources by providing local governments with access to financial assistance to further promote the economic viability of rural communities. This program is intended to be highly flexible and the loan amounts will vary depending on the need of applicants. It will provide term loans to local governments, or economic development organizations substantially underwritten by a unit of local government; within counties with populations of 75,000 or fewer or a contiguous county of 125,000 or fewer as stated in [section 288.065, Florida Statutes](#). The long-term goals of the RCDRL include the creation of jobs for the residents of rural Florida and an increase in economic vitality and diversification for these areas. For more information, visit <http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/rural-community-programs/rural-areas-of-opportunity/rural-revolving-loan-program> or contact Tina Grow at 850-717-8533 or Tina.Grow@DEO.MyFlorida.com

- **Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program** funds are available annually for water and sewer projects that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Moneys also may be available for water and sewer projects that serve a specific “job-creating entity” if most of the jobs created are for people with low or moderate incomes. For more information, visit www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/assistance-for-governments-and-organizations/florida-small-cities-community-development-block-grant-program; contact information is available from the “Contacts” section on the left menu.
 - **CDBG-MIT** – Rebuild Florida’s Mitigation Program – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that \$633 million in first-of-its-kind funding would be available to the state of Florida for disaster mitigation projects in areas impacted by presidentially declared disasters in 2016 and 2017. These funds are available through HUD's newly created Community Development Block Grant - Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) program and will be used to fund disaster mitigation projects to better protect Florida from future disasters. For more information, visit <http://floridajobs.org/rebuildflorida/mitigation> or contact Joseph Oglesby at joseph.oglesby@deo.myflorida.com.
- **Technical Assistance Planning Grants** – DEO receives legislatively appropriated funds through the Bureau of Comprehensive Planning to provide Technical Assistance Grants to local governments and regional planning councils to assist counties and municipalities in developing economic development strategies, meeting the requirements of the Community Planning Act, addressing critical local planning issues, and promoting innovative planning solutions to challenges identified by local government applicants. For more information, visit www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/programs/community-planning-table-of-contents/technical-assistance or contact Sherry Spiers at 850.717-8499 or sherry.spiers2@deo.myflorida.com.

Florida Rural Water Association Loan Program provides low-interest bond or bank financing for community utility projects in coordination with the DEP SRF programs discussed above. Other financial assistance may also be available. For more information, visit www.frwa.net and look for the links to “Funding” and “Long Term Financing” or contact Gary Williams at 850.668.2746 or gary.williams@frwa.net.

Enterprise Florida is a resource for a variety of public and private projects and activities, including those in rural communities, to facilitate the creation, capital investment, and strengthening and diversification of local economies by promoting tourism, trade and economic development. The various Enterprise Florida programs and financial incentives are intended, among other things, to provide additional financial assistance to enable communities to better access other infrastructure funding programs. For more information, visit www.eflorida.com; contact information is on the “Contact Us” link at the top of the page.

Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN) is a university-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and improvement. The EFCN works with the public and private sectors to promote sustainable

environmental solutions while bolstering efforts to manage costs. Go to this link and select Florida on the map to find out about Florida Water and Wastewater Funding Sources: <https://efcnetwork.org/funding-sources-by-state/>.

Florida's **five regional water management districts** also offer financial assistance 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 Alternative Water Supply Development, Springs Restoration and Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) projects. The amount of funding available, matching requirements and types of assistance may vary from year-to-year. For information on funding opportunities, contact the water management district with jurisdiction in your area – see floridadep.gov/water-policy/water-policy/content/water-management-districts for a map and links to each of the districts.

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP) helps to improve quality of life for low-income individuals by promoting affordable water/wastewater facilities, community development, environmental health, and economic self-sufficiency. For more information, visit <http://sercap.org/> or contact Mary Gavin at 352.379.9802 or mgavin@sercap.org.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):

- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** – Under the 2008 Farm Bill, this program promotes coordination between Natural Resources Conservation Service and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. For more information, visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/rcpp/>
- **Rural Development Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Guaranteed and Direct Loans and Grants Program** provides a combination of loans and grants for water, wastewater, and solid waste projects to rural communities and small incorporated municipalities. Some nonprofit entities also may be eligible. For more information, visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/agencies/rural-utilities-service> or contact Michael Langston at 352.338.3485 or michael.langston@fl.usda.gov.

U.S. Department of Commerce **Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works and Development Facilities Program** provides funding to help distressed communities in economic decline 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. The program focuses on redeveloping existing infrastructure. For more information, visit www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities or contact Greg Vaday at 404.730.3009 or gvaday@eda.gov.

You may also want to review:

- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance** at www.cfda.gov, provides a database of all federal programs available to state and local governments; public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals. A variety of sources of niche funding may be appropriate to your situation. Private funding sources (endowments, private trusts, etc.) may, on occasion, fund water-related projects; a variety of sources to investigate these opportunities are available on the web.

- **Congress – State and Tribal Assistance Grant Program** provides the opportunity to secure Congressional sponsorship of project funding, including water project funding, through the annual federal budget process. The program’s stated purpose is to strengthen state, local governments, and tribal abilities to address environmental and public health threats while furthering environmental compliance. You may want to consider contacting your Representative or Senators for assistance in pursuing funding; go to www.govtrack.us/congress/members to find your congress members.
- **Florida’s Division of Emergency Management** for disaster relief at www.floridadisaster.org or your county emergency management agency (see <https://www.floridadisaster.org/programs--partners/> and the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** at 1.800.621.FEMA (3362), or visit www.fema.gov where the process for securing disaster-related infrastructure assistance begins.
- **The Florida Resource Directory** at redi.state.fl.us, which provides a searchable directory of information about and links to many state and federal programs with resources available to help local communities. Funding for water-related projects is just one of many types of assistance identified here.
- **Grants.gov** at www.grants.gov, which is the official federal website for information on more than 1,000 federal grant programs. The site includes an automatic email notification system for keeping apprised of federal grant opportunities.

If you have general questions about financial assistance unrelated to any particular program, please contact **Trina Vielhauer, Director of the Division of Water Restoration Assistance** with the Department of Environmental Protection at 850.245.2998 or Trina.Vielhauer@FloridaDEP.gov.