



## Water Resource Funding in Florida April 2018

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection 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](http://floridadep.gov/wra/srf/content/cwsrf-program) or contact Tim Banks at 850.245.2969 or [timothy.banks@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:timothy.banks@dep.state.fl.us).
- **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](http://floridadep.gov/wra/srf/content/dwsrf-program) or contact Shanin Speas-Frost at 850.245.2991 or [shanin.speasfrost@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:shanin.speasfrost@dep.state.fl.us).
- 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 [floridadep.gov/wra/319-tmdl-fund/content/federal-clean-water-act-grants](http://floridadep.gov/wra/319-tmdl-fund/content/federal-clean-water-act-grants) or contact Amanda Peck at 850.245.2952 or [amanda.peck@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:amanda.peck@dep.state.fl.us).
- 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@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:amanda.peck@dep.state.fl.us).

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](http://www.leg.state.fl.us)

There are a number of 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)

**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” as long as 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](http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/assistance-for-governments-and-organizations/florida-small-cities-community-development-block-grant-program) or contact Sherri Martin at 850.717-8520 or [Sherri.Martin@deo.myflorida.com](mailto:Sherri.Martin@deo.myflorida.com).

**Technical Assistance Planning Grants** – Through the Bureau of Comprehensive Planning, DEO receives legislatively appropriated funds 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](http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/programs/community-planning-table-of-contents/technical-assistance) or contact Nia Clark at 850.717-8492 or [nia.clark@deo.myflorida.com](mailto:nia.clark@deo.myflorida.com).

**Florida Rural Water Association Loan Program** – This 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](http://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](mailto:gary.williams@frwa.net).

**Enterprise Florida** – Enterprise Florida’s program 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](http://www.eflorida.com); contact information is available from the “Contact Us” link at the top of the page.

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 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](http://floridadep.gov/water-policy/water-policy/content/water-management-districts) for a map and links to each of the districts.

U.S. Department of Commerce **Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works and Development Facilities Program** – The 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](http://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities) or contact Greg Vaday at 404.730.3009 or [gvaday@eda.gov](mailto:gvaday@eda.gov).

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**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. Some nonprofit entities also may be eligible. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program) or contact Michael Langston at 352.338.3485 or [michael.langston@fl.usda.gov](mailto:michael.langston@fl.usda.gov).

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** – Under the 2008 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners.

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/)

**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](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members) to find your congress members.

You may also want to review:

- **Grants.gov** at [www.grants.gov](http://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.
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance** at [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov), which 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. There are a variety of sources of niche funding that may be appropriate to your situation. There are also private funding sources (endowments, private trusts, etc.) that may, on occasion, fund water-related projects; a variety of sources to investigate these opportunities are available on the web.

- **The Florida Resource Directory** at [redi.state.fl.us](http://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.

If you are interested in **disaster relief**, your first contact should be to **Florida's Division of Emergency Management** at [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org) or your county emergency management agency (see [www.floridadisaster.org/fl\\_county\\_em.asp](http://www.floridadisaster.org/fl_county_em.asp)); and the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** at 1.800.621.FEMA (3362), or visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) where the process for securing disaster-related infrastructure assistance begins.

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@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:trina.vielhauer@dep.state.fl.us).