

PRE-PLANNING AND LEGAL ENTITY FORMATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

NOTE: This is a living document that will be regularly updated.

1. What is the purpose of these Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SDWSRF) set-aside funds?

Funds are intended to assist communities not currently served domestic water from an existing community water system and public water systems, which cannot access SDWSRF funds due to the lack of an eligible entity. The funds are to be used to evaluate potential entities (governing bodies) which would have, or could have, the necessary authority to undertake planning, construction, and operation of a project to solve the water problem(s) of the targeted area or community. Once an appropriate governing entity is identified and there is sufficient public support, then the governing entity would be formed through a subsequent action by the applicant. In some cases the result would be the identification or creation of a regional authority, identification of an existing authority (public water system) which could extend service, or the creation of a new governing authority. In cases where a community is geographically isolated, formation of a new eligible entity would be necessary.

For purposes of these set-aside funds, primary drinking water standards includes drinking water quality or quantity public health problems.

2. What is the total amount of funding available under this set-aside?

The total funding available in this initial pilot period is \$1,707,160.

3. What is the maximum amount of funding an applicant can apply for?

\$250,000 (grant funds) per grant application period.

4. Who can be included in the Pre-Planning project?

Communities eligible to receive Pre-Planning funds include (but are not limited to):

Homes, schools and businesses (1) that obtain drinking water from domestic wells or surface water sources with a water quality or quantity public health problem, *and* (2) that are not currently served by a PWS, that wish to:

- form a legal entity with the necessary authority to access SDWSRF funds and eventually a Community Water System (CWS), or
- become part of or be served by a nearby PWS.

State small water systems (SSWS), or multiple SSWSs, and individual homes/businesses (1) that obtain drinking water from domestic or surface water sources with a water quality or quantity public health problem, *and* (2) that are not currently served by a PWS, that wish to:

- form a legal entity with the necessary authority to access SDWSRF funding and eventually a CWS, or
- become part of or be served by a nearby PWS.

Existing PWSs with a water quality or quantity public health problem that are not eligible for SDWSRF funding due to the lack of a legal entity, that wish to:

- form a legal entity with the necessary authority to access SDWSRF funding, or
- form a regional entity eligible for SDWSRF funding with the appropriate governing authority over participating PWSs, or
- become part of or be served by a nearby PWS.

5. Who is eligible to apply for these funds?

Eligible applicants are limited to public agencies, such as county planning departments or existing public water systems, Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo), public colleges/universities, Joint Power Authority (JPA) and non-profit organizations that can enter into a funding agreement with California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and demonstrate their ability to carry out the proposal.

6. How does an eligible applicant apply for funding?

There will be an open application period beginning in August 2013, with applications due November 8, 2013. Information will be posted on CDPH's website, along with the application package. A completed application, including all required deliverables must be submitted by the stated deadline in the application. No time extensions will be given.

7. How will the award of funds be determined?

A review panel consisting of CDPH headquarters and field staff will review, score and rank each application received. A funding list will be compiled and posted on CDPH's website and CDPH will notify selected applicants of funding approval.

8. When will funds be awarded?

CDPH anticipates issuing funding agreements 30 days from the posting of rankings on its website. Funds are disbursed through a reimbursement process.

Applicants selected for funding will be provided additional information regarding the reimbursement process.

9. Is the use of the Pre-Planning set-aside funding required to be eligible for SDWSRF planning or construction funding?

No. These set-aside funds are not intended as an additional or separate funding step to access SDWSRF planning or construction funds. The funds are intended to assist communities with identified public health problems, that are not currently eligible for SDWSRF funds due to, among other things, the lack of an eligible entity with the necessary authority over the targeted area/community(ies). Once an appropriate eligible entity is identified and formed, that entity would be able to move into the regular funding process for SDWSRF planning and construction, beginning with the submission of a pre-application.

10. What are the minimum authorities and powers the identified governing entity must have in order to be eligible to submit a pre-application for SDWSRF planning or construction funding?

The governing entity will need to have such authority and powers as the following:

- operate a public water system
- undertake formation necessary to cover the targeted area/community(ies), such as a LAFCo application to extend district boundaries or annexation by local municipality or, if necessary, form an entirely new entity
- assess fees for domestic water supply on property owners and consumers in the targeted area or community(ies)
- legally bind the targeted area/community(ies) including affected individual property owners to accept and pay for domestic water supply from the selected entity
- hold necessary water rights or legally contract for water supply needed to supply the targeted area/community(ies)
- acquire or construct the necessary facilities
- acquire necessary rights to an adequate water supply source
- enter into a funding agreement with CDPH on behalf of the targeted area/community(ies)
- assess/charge the homeowners, as necessary, to fund any part of a project not provided as grant funds and also to operate and maintain the project for the long-term
- enter into contracts as necessary, with adjacent or neighboring public water systems for water supply sources
- enter into contracts with adjacent or neighboring public water systems for purposes of consolidation. This includes authority to transfer existing facilities (e.g. wells and distribution facilities) as necessary to achieve a consolidation or regional solution

11. What activities are eligible for funding?

The following are costs that may be **eligible** for funding under the Project. This list is provided for illustrative purposes only and may not be relied upon as a comprehensive list of eligible costs. CDPH reserves the right to make additional eligibility determinations as questions arise and in the course of reviewing claims submitted for reimbursement.)

- Feasibility study to identify and evaluate options for formation of a legal entity, including identification of the steps to create each type of entity, estimated cost and schedule to complete formation
- Public Outreach
- Identification of interested project participants and potential service connections
- Formation of a legal entity (new or expanded) encompassing at least 15 service connections to serve the affected area or facilities service to the affected region by an existing public water system
- Costs associated with the LAFCo process/requirement
- Legal services, financial planning, and administrative fees related to the formation of a legal entity
- Administrative costs related to management of Project tasks and costs associated with the administration of the Pre-planning grant (including the preparation of claims for reimbursement)
- Costs associated with the preparation of the Pre-planning application
- Preliminary engineering, such as surveying, necessary for the formation of a legal entity
- Feasibility study to look at water source options
- Environmental work necessary for the formation of a legal entity (new or expended)
- Limited water quantity testing to establish existing conditions and verify the public health problem, and/or establish the boundaries of the geographic area affected by the public health problem
- Limited water quality testing by California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) certified laboratories, to establish existing conditions and verify the public health problem, and/or to establish the boundaries of the geographic area affected by the public health problem. (Routine water quality sampling is considered an operations and maintenance (O&M) cost and as such is not an eligible expense).

Note: Water quality sampling conducted by an appropriate California ELAP certified laboratory is acceptable for the purposes of demonstrating a water quality problem. Please be aware that lists vary depending on the targeted constituent. For procedures, lists of certified labs, and other related information, please visit: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/labs/Pages/ELAP.aspx>. CDPH will

evaluate alternative forms of water quality sampling data and/or reports submitted for sufficiency on a case by case basis.

12. What are ineligible activities?

The following are costs that are **ineligible** for funding under the Project. This list is provided for illustrative purposes only and may not be relied upon as a comprehensive list of ineligible costs. CDPH reserves the right to make additional eligibility determinations as questions arise and in the course of reviewing claims submitted for reimbursement.

- Engineering design (preliminary or final design of a project alternative)
- Income/MHI surveys
- Evaluation of solutions to the water quality or quantity public health problem
- Funding for operation costs (For example, if an existing PWS has a suspended status with the Secretary of State, the cost to bring the PWS into compliance with the Secretary of State is not eligible.)
- Purchase of equipment
- Purchase of interim water (including bottled water)
- Routine water quality or quantity sampling
- Purchase of water rights
- Connection fees

13. Why is engineering design not eligible?

These set aside funds are designed to be used for activities or purposes that otherwise cannot be funded with the SDWSRF planning/construction funds; and are necessary to enable the targeted area/community(ies) to access SDWSRF project funding.

14. Are water quality/quantity tests eligible?

Limited water quality/quantity testing of local private wells or surface water source to determine the public health issues which needs to be addressed and to determine the boundaries of the affected area is eligible.

15. Why is the cost for an income survey not eligible?

An income survey is eligible for funding under the planning/construction process and is not a necessary component for these funds. Additionally, the affected area identified under pre-planning may not be the same area applicable to any future planning or construction project.

16. Can a request for additional funds be submitted after funds are awarded to an applicant?

CDPH intends to commit all available funds; however, if 100% of the available funding is not committed, CDPH may consider a request for additional funds but in no case, will funds committed to an applicant exceed the \$250,000 limitation.

17. Is there a deadline by which the activities must be completed?

No, other than the general State requirement of 3 years; however, CDPH anticipates that the average time for completion will be less than a year.

18. Why are connection fees ineligible?

These funds are not intended to reimburse for costs eligible under the normal SDWSRF planning or construction program. Connection fees are eligible for reimbursement under SDWSRF construction funding. (Connection fees typically only apply to construction projects to consolidate or interconnect existing public water systems or a project to extend service to communities where homes, schools, and businesses, obtain drinking water from domestic wells or surface water sources with water quality or quantity public health problems.)