

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

The Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant will provide nearly \$250 million to help Ohio communities make necessary investments in water and wastewater infrastructure. Projects will improve access to clean drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

The program is being administered by the Ohio Department of Development (Development) in partnership with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA). Funding for the program is provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

What are examples of eligible projects?

Funding will be allocated to projects as either “Design Projects” or “Construction Projects”. Example projects include:

- Sewage/Wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) improvements/expansion
- New/replacement sanitary sewer lines
- Excess sanitary sewer infiltration/inflow correction
- Improvements to drinking water treatment facilities
- Waterline improvements or extensions
- Repair, replacement or construction of drinking water towers
- Design costs for a public drinking water or sewer/wastewater infrastructure project

Can eligible applicants receive grant funding for infrastructure engineering/design costs?

Yes. Grants are available for infrastructure engineering design costs. The maximum allocation for design project grants is \$250,000. Eligible applicants should have planning activities completed prior to seeking funding for design costs.

Who is eligible to apply?

Public entities within a political subdivision with the authority to own and operate public water and sewer systems and non-profit, non-community public water systems may submit an application. Political subdivision means a county, township, municipal corporation, or other body corporate and politic responsible for governmental activities in a geographic area smaller than that of the state.

County engineers are to provide a prioritized list of projects for Development’s consideration. County engineers can go to investinginohiosfuture.ohio.gov to provide Development their prioritized list. To be eligible for funding, an application will need to be completed whether a project is or is not on the prioritized list. The online application and engineer form can found on investinginohiosfuture.ohio.gov/.

Does my project have to be listed on the County Engineer’s prioritization list?

No. Projects not included on the County Engineer’s prioritized lists of projects can apply for funds.

Is there a minimum or maximum grant amount?

There is no minimum grant amount for an individual project. The maximum grant amount for an individual drinking water or sewer construction project is \$5 million. Projects requiring additional funds due to lack of matching funds and other inhibiting factors may apply for up to \$10 million. The maximum award for a design project is \$250,000.

Can a community apply for multiple projects?

Yes.

What is the “cost share” or matching requirement?

Eligible applicants will be asked as part of the application process to identify match funding. Applicants that demonstrate a cost share of the total project cost will receive additional points towards the application score. Acceptable sources of match funds include local government, state government (other than funds from the Water and Sewer Infrastructure Grant program), federal government and by for-profit or non-profit entities.

The cost share requirement may be waived for an applicant under extenuating circumstances, such as an inability to provide match funding by an economically disadvantaged community. The eligible applicant must provide a narrative explaining the reason(s) why match funds for the project are unavailable. This information will be considered during the application review process.

What criteria will be used to help prioritize how projects are selected?

The program will include a specific emphasis on addressing the needs of economically disadvantaged communities, including providing safe, reliable drinking water in areas that lack infrastructure, providing sewage treatment capacity in unsewered areas and promoting regional development of infrastructure to serve multiple communities.

The review process will also strongly consider the “readiness to proceed.” This means that those projects that already have approved engineering/design, plans and permits and can begin construction within 1-6 months will receive a greater score on the application.

Projects that are included on the County Engineer’s list and provide applicable supporting documentation will receive additional points awarded to the application.

How are economically disadvantaged communities defined?

Economically disadvantaged communities are identified based on a review of criteria such as:

- Median Household Income (MHI) for the area
- Unemployment Rate
- Estimated average monthly residential charge for water usage
- Estimated average monthly residential charge for wastewater

Can funding be used to retire existing infrastructure debt or to fund a project that is already underway?

No. The federal ARPA Interim Final Rule states that “ARPA funds are intended to be used prospectively and precludes use of these funds to cover the costs of debt incurred prior to March 3, 2021.”

What are the other important requirements under ARPA?

The ARPA program requirements are similar to any other “public works” project that would be implemented in the state, which includes obtaining all necessary state and federal permits, following all state bidding and contracting laws, and following fiscally sound practices in the administration of the funds. Unlike other federal funding, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements do not apply to projects. For approved projects, communities should plan to provide supporting documentation for costs reimbursed from ARPA funds and provide documentation of applicable match costs.

When will grant awards start?

Applications will be reviewed and scored as they are received. An incomplete application may result in an application not receiving funds. Grant agreements will be executed between the recipient and Development. All final awards will be determined at the discretion of the Director of Development.

How will funds be awarded?

Funds will be made available to a grantee upon the execution of a grant agreement between Development and the approved applicant. Fund amounts greater than \$5,000 shall not reside in a grantee's accounts for longer than 30 days at one time. Grantees will be able to submit financial draw requests to Development as needed.

Where do I submit an application?

To submit an online application, applicants must be registered with the [OHID system](#). Once the registration process is complete, an application can be started and submitted at investinginohiosfuture.ohio.gov.

If you need technical assistance for the application process, please email watergrants@development.ohio.gov.

What information do I need when applying?

You should be ready with the following information to complete your application:

- Applicant contact information
- Project description and type of project
- A project map (if available)
- Estimate of population served by projects
- Disadvantaged community criteria (population, MHI, unemployment, current water/sewer rates, etc.)
- Estimated Project cost
- List of available match funds and documentation of commitment
- Estimated Project Schedule and Readiness to Proceed
- Engineering Services Agreement (If Available)
- Engineering Reports (if available)
- Information about status of obtaining any required permits

Where can I get more information and help?

For more information, visit our website at investinginohiosfuture.ohio.gov.

If you have questions, feel free to contact watergrants@development.ohio.gov