



## **Emerging Contaminants (EC) in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Grant (SDC)**

**June 15, 2022** - As part of a government-wide effort to confront PFAS pollution, EPA is inviting states and territories to apply for \$1 billion – the first of \$5 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant funding – to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants in drinking water, specifically in small or disadvantaged communities

### **EPA Announces Availability of \$5 billion to address emerging contaminants in drinking water**

WASHINGTON (June 15, 2022)—As part of a government-wide effort to confront PFAS pollution, EPA is making available \$1 billion in grant funding through President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help communities that are on the frontlines of PFAS contamination to reduce PFAS in drinking water in communities facing disproportionate impacts. EPA is making \$1 billion available in FY2022 and a total of \$5 billion for fiscal years 2022-2026.

The goal of the *Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities* grant program is to have states, territories, and tribes prioritize grant funding in small or disadvantaged communities to focus exclusively on addressing ECs in drinking water, including PFAS. Emerging contaminants such as compounds like per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), pharmaceuticals and personal care products, and unregulated contaminants such as manganese, perchlorate, and 1,4 dioxane. Funding will be provided to participating states and territories to benefit small or disadvantaged communities in scoping, planning, testing and remediating emerging contaminants in drinking and source water.

### **Background**

The goal of the *Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities* grant program is for states to provide grants to public water systems in small or disadvantaged communities to address emerging contaminants, including PFAS. Grants will be awarded non-competitively to states, territories, and tribes. For the purposes of this grant program, the term “state” is used to describe the fifty states and Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This grant focuses on projects in which the primary purpose is to address the challenges of PFAS in drinking water, whether it is found in the public water system or in source water. Projects that address any contaminant listed in any of EPA’s [Contaminant Candidate Lists](#) are also eligible. To continue the use of the funds to maximize public health protection, EPA also encourages states to address perchlorate and contaminants that have higher levels of health concerns in small and disadvantaged communities.

## Available Funding

BIL provides \$50 billion to EPA's water programs. Of that amount, \$5 billion is appropriated to the EC grant program. The agency is announcing a Letter of Intent (LOI) period whereby states and territories seeking grant funding are to submit LOI correspondence to EPA. EPA will use this information to allocate funds according to a formula and administer the grant accordingly.

EC grant program annual appropriation: \$5 billion for FY2022-2026.

- \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2022;
- \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;
- \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
- \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and
- \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2026.

There is no cost-share/match applicable for the funding made available under this grant program.

## Eligible Applicants

Established as a noncompetitive grant program, eligibility to apply for and receive funds is limited to the fifty states and Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and tribes within the U.S. Please see below for information on the tribal grant program.

States are to use this funding to make grants to eligible emerging contaminant projects and/or activities in small or disadvantaged communities. The target beneficiaries are the eligible recipients for this grant, communities as described in section 1459A of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA):

- **“Disadvantaged Community”** is one determined by the state to be disadvantaged under the affordability criteria established by the state under section 1452(d)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act or may become a disadvantaged community as a result of carrying out a project or activity under the grant program. As with the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, each state has statutory discretion to set its own criteria.
- **“Small Community”** is one that has a population of less than 10,000 individuals that the Administrator determines does not have the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance a project or activity under the grant program. This is a statutory definition.

EPA will distribute the national tribal allotment of 2% of the appropriations, estimated at \$20M in FY22 funding, through the Grant Program as an allocation to regions based upon the Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants Tribal Set Aside Program (DWIG-TSA) allocation formula. Regional offices will develop the procedures and schedule for annual selection of projects and activities, obligation of funds, or distribution of grants.

## Eligible Projects

Eligible uses include efforts that benefit small or disadvantaged communities in testing and remediating emerging contaminants, including water filtration. States are strongly encouraged to fund projects that:

- **Target resources to communities most in need of assistance to ensure that no community is left behind with unsafe, inadequate water.** States are encouraged to think creatively about how to reach communities in need with EC grant funds, particularly vulnerable communities of color, underserved communities, and Tribal communities. EPA will collaborate with state programs to share models, examples, and build state capacity to target resources to disadvantaged communities and small systems lacking capacity. EPA will launch a substantial technical assistance program – in close collaboration with states – to provide assistance directly to disadvantaged communities and small communities that lack the financial, managerial, and technical capacity to access this or other funding sources.
- **Engage residents and community stakeholders in disadvantaged and small communities.** Drinking water grants have successfully funded many projects in small and disadvantaged communities in the past. To continue and deepen this success, it may be necessary to develop relationships with new constituencies to broaden impact and reach eligible communities with funding and assistance. EPA encourages states to reach beyond traditional stakeholder organizations and engage neighborhood and other organizations connected to the community to help identify needs and communicate priorities.
- **Drive toward energy efficient and climate smart water systems.** Some water systems use significant amounts of energy which, when generated by the combustion of fossil fuels or other materials, contribute to climate change. At the same time, they are often vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather. While the funding is specific to emerging contaminant s projects, EPA encourages states to support innovation through funding of projects that progress reduction in emerging contaminant exposure in drinking water while proactively minimizing greenhouse gas emissions; incorporating renewable energy generation; or build on resilience to climate change threats using the best available and most geographically relevant climate information, projections, and standards, such as the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard.
- **Streamline state programs to build the pipeline of projects.** EPA encourages states to strategically use new authorities and funds from BIL as a catalyst to continue building and maintaining a robust project pipeline of water infrastructure improvement projects. The EC grant and DWSRF programs can complement each other in supporting disadvantaged communities' and small communities' development of projects. States

must balance the need to use all funds in a timely and expeditious manner with a need for sustainable projects that can transform the sector.

- **Proactive strategies towards pollution prevention.** Chemical pollution typically occurs in complex mixtures of regulated and non-regulated compounds that pose a substantial risk to water quality and aquatic ecosystems. The awareness of regulators, decision makers and practitioners at the state and local level towards assessment, monitoring and management of chemical pollution is a key. States are encouraged to support pollution prevention (P2) strategies that focus on reducing the amount of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants released into the environment where they could threaten water supplies. EPA will support these actors towards taking major efforts into addressing this challenge by developing new concepts and tools for holistic and solutions-oriented monitoring, impact assessment and diagnosis, modeling and abatement of these complex mixtures.

## Timeline

In June 2022, EPA invites states and territories to participate in the program and submit a letter of intent (LOI) to participate to receive an allotments. States and territories have up to 60 days to submit a LOI before final distribution allotments are provided under the grant program. In late Summer of 2022, the Grant Program will release documentation to assist states and territories in the development and implementation of their respective programs and project awards. States and territories are anticipated to collaborate with the EPA regional offices on draft projects and workplans for approval prior to applying for grant funding in Grants.gov and receiving awards. EPA will continue to provide additional resources to states and territories as the grant program moves forward, including communication on technical assistance and other topics relating to emerging contaminants.

When reviewing the draft workplans, EPA Regions must be able to determine that activities conform to all applicable requirements of the grant. Participating states must submit their final application package to the [grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) website. Participating states are encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible. Funding is anticipated to begin awarded to the states and territories as early as FY23. EPA Regional offices are the primary points of contact to approve grant applications and award funding.

## How to Apply

EPA Regions will initiate contact with states to inform them of the program and the application process. States should then contact their EPA Regional representative to submit applications via [grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants).

States that intend to pursue grant program funding to address emerging contaminants must submit a **Letter of Intent** to participate indicating the lead agency charged with the state's oversight and responsibility for receipt and actions pertaining to the grant program. EPA will

use this information to allocate funds according to a formula and administer the grant accordingly.

1. **Letter to the governor:** EPA will invite states and territories to participate in the program. An example letter from EPA to the governor will be available shortly.
2. **Notice of Intent to Participate:** States and territories must submit a LOI to initiate participation in the Program no later than the deadline of August 15, 2022. EPA will reach out to any states that have not responded to the announcement or submitted an LOI.
3. **Submission of the LOI:** The LOI can be submitted by email to [WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov](mailto:WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov). The Notice must be from an official within the governor's office, the director of the designated agency, or other authorized officials.
4. **Review of the LOI:** The EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) will forward a copy of the LOI to the appropriate EPA Regional Office for record. Regions will work with the states as necessary to resolve any identified issues.

#### **Contact Information**

**Agency Contact:** Yvonne Gonzalez, [gonzalez.yvonne@epa.gov](mailto:gonzalez.yvonne@epa.gov)

**For general information on any of the WIIN grants,**  
please contact [WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov](mailto:WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov)