E-Bulletin Newsletter

To provide affordable financial assistance to communities within Wisconsin for water infrastructure projects that protect and improve public health and water quality for current and future generations.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund

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Upcoming Deadlines

Since the Sept. 30 CWFP PF Application deadline falls on a Saturday, that deadline is extended to Monday.

October 2
SFY 24 CWFP Application deadline for Principal Forgiveness (PF) projects (reminder: submit plans & specifications to DNR Water Quality as well as with the CWFP Application).

October 31
SFY 25 CWFP & SDWLP notice of Intent to Apply (ITA) deadline.

Schedule Loan Payments in Advance

The Environmental Improvement Fund (EIF), in conjunction with US Bank, improved eBill which is a secure, cost-free electronic solution to make debt service payments. As part of EIF's ongoing commitment to providing eco-conscious and user-friendly choices, we are excited to launch the new eBill feature: Customers can now conveniently schedule payments in advance!

Video tutorial

If you have questions regarding this new feature, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has created a 5½-minute video on how to schedule a payment, see https://eif.wi.gov/BillerPayment/Tutorial.

Convenient & proactive

To simplify your EIF November 1st invoice payment, please access the secure eBill website now and schedule your debt service payment for the end of October. The link to eBill will be available on your invoice and the following websites:

- DOA EIF - https://eif.wi.gov/
- EIF Web Reports - http://eif.doa.wi.gov/
- Capital Finance Office - https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/StateFinances/CapitalFinanceLaunch.aspx

If you have questions or concerns about the eBill portal, invoice process, or your scheduled loan repayments, please reach out to doaeif@wisconsin.gov.

Market Rate Unchanged

There is no change in the market rate for financial assistance agreements approved by a municipality's governing body on or after October 1, 2023. The market rate for loans that have a final maturity of:

- 20 years or less will remain at 3.900%
- 21-30 years will remain at 4.100%

The Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) and the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) provide subsidy to buy down the market rate on loans (reduced interest rate loans). The standard loan interest rate for both programs is **55% of the market rate**. View current loan interest rates at dnr.wi.gov/Aid/Documents/EIF/Guide/Interest.html

DNR, Environmental Loans Section—CF/2, 101 S. Webster Street, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
dnr.wi.gov/aid/eif.html | CWFP phone: 608-358-3330 | SDWLP phone: 608-720-0802 | staff directory webpage

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Program implementation details are outlined in chs. NR 162 and NR 166, Wis. Adm. Code. Legal notice: This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in federal regulations or state statutes or administrative rules are referenced. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing federal regulations and state statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. This publication is available in alternative format upon request, call 608-267-9481 for more information.

SFY 2024 CWFP PERF Score Reevaluation Requests

You may request a Priority Evaluation and Ranking Form score reevaluation within 30 days of the Clean Water Fund Program Principal Forgiveness Application deadline. Since the deadline falls on a Saturday this year, the deadline is extended to Monday, October 2, 2023, per s. 990.001(4), Wis. Stats.

- The deadline to submit a PERF score reevaluation request is **November 1, 2023**.

Reasons for requesting a reevaluation include: providing supporting documents that were not uploaded with the original submittal, correcting a PERF that was originally submitted on the wrong form, or correcting other errors.

Email the request and supporting documentation to the assigned DNR Construction Management Engineer and the CWFP Coordinator, Lisa.Bushby@wisconsin.gov.

Reminder: Obtain Plan Review Approvals Prior to Starting Construction

The department has recently observed an increase in the occurrence of municipalities commencing construction of reviewable projects without first obtaining approval of the plans and specifications.

This is a reminder that commencing construction without written approval is a violation of s. NR 108.03(1), Wis. Adm. Code.

Additionally, because the department is prohibited from approving projects after construction has commenced (s. NR 108.04(5), Wis. Adm. Code) and because plan approval is a required piece of a complete Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP)/Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) application, any entities that commence construction without plan approval are ineligible for CWFP/SDWLP funds.

As a reminder, the CWFP requires an approved facility plan and approved plans & specs, regardless of a "reviewable" or "maintenance" project classification. For example, an abbreviated form of a facilities plan, or engineering report, is required even for sanitary sewer replacement or rehabilitation projects, if seeking CWFP funding.

If you have a critical project timeline that requires approval by a certain date, please reach out *as early in the process as possible* to a DNR Plan Review Engineer to discuss your circumstances and schedule.

- For wastewater plan review questions, see "Plan Review Contacts" on Wastewater Plan Review page
- Direct public water system plan review questions to DNRPublicWaterPlanReview@Wisconsin.gov

EPA Has Funding to Award

Apply Now for Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program Grant

Note: This grant program is offered directly through EPA. It is NOT a Wisconsin DNR grant program.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has $19 million in federal funds available through its *Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program* to award as grants to assist underserved, small (population of less than 10,000 people), and disadvantaged communities for the purpose of increasing drinking water system resilience to natural hazards.

Eligible applicants for this competitive grant program are public water systems, water systems located on areas governed by Tribes, and a State, on behalf of an underserved community. For-profit organizations and nonprofit organizations are not eligible to apply.

Funding through this grant program must be used for the planning, design, construction, implementation, operation, or maintenance of a program or project that increases resilience of public water systems to natural hazards. Examples of projects are available on the EPA grant program website.

The grant program is a competitive program. Applications must be submitted exclusively through Grants.gov.

- **Application Deadline: November 6, 2023**

Application instructions are outlined in:

- FY23 Request for Applications (RFA) Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program [PDF]

Rule Revisions Effective Soon

The Environmental Loans Section expects revisions to Chapters NR 162 and NR 166, Wis. Adm. Code, to go into effect in the near future.

In the upcoming months, we anticipate providing you with a compendium of changes and updated publications and web pages. More details about the rule revisions will be forthcoming in future E-Bulletins.

Background

The administrative rules for the Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) and Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) were last updated in 2015. Since that time there have been changes to state statutes and federal regulations, and 2015 Wis. Act 55 took effect.

In addition, 2021 Wisconsin Act 112, which includes 2021 Senate Bill 489 – Procedural Changes for CWFP and SDWLP Applications, removed multiple barriers to streamlining the programs' application processes from ss. 281.58 and 281.59 and 281.61, Wis. Stats.

The current rule revision process started in late 2020. During the development of these rules, department staff worked with external advisory groups to get feedback regarding the existing programs and the proposed rules.

During that process, no external customers raised any issues, and there were no controversies regarding the proposed rules. Comments were received, however, during the public comment period regarding two sections of Chapter NR 166—those sections were revised in the proposed rule in response to public comments.

Contact information

For questions or concerns about final rule revisions to chs. NR 162 (CWFP) and NR 166 (SDWLP), contact Jeanne Cargill at Jeanne.Cargill@Wisconsin.gov

Note: Department of Natural Resources (NR)

Recording and Slides Available for "Securing Our Future: Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Funding Opportunities" Webinar

On 9/19/2023, the Wisconsin DNR and Focus on Energy held the "Securing Our Future: Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Funding Opportunities" webinar. Information about energy efficiency improvements and funding opportunities for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects was discussed. The webinar was recorded:

- Securing Our Future [VIDEO Length 0:51:08]
- DNR slides
- Focus on Energy slides

CWFP Energy Efficiency Priority Principal Forgiveness

Principal forgiveness policies are outlined in the annual Intended Use Plan. Priority Principal Forgiveness is an incentive that may be awarded in addition to general Principal Forgiveness (PF) with the caveat that no more than 70% of the total Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) financial assistance amount can be awarded as PF.

- Energy Efficiency Priority PF will be awarded as a 1 to 1 match of the Focus on Energy incentive funds up to a cap of **$50,000** per project.

Applicants are not required to qualify under the CWFP affordability criteria in order to be eligible to receive Energy Efficiency Priority PF. Municipalities who submit a CWFP Application after the September 30 PF deadline can still receive a loan and be considered for Energy Efficiency Priority PF if funds are still available.

To qualify for Energy Efficiency Priority PF, the municipality must be the recipient of an energy efficiency incentive from Focus on Energy.

Required documentation

Applicants must provide documentation of the incentive agreement from Focus on Energy. For prescriptive awards, the applicant will need to request pre-approval from Focus on Energy, in order to obtain an incentive agreement. This documentation is not required at the time of application submittal but must be provided prior to loan closing.

Applicants who want to claim Energy Efficiency Priority PF after submittal of their CWFP application, but prior to loan closing, should work with their DNR Project Manager to submit documentation and be considered for funding.

October 31 SFY 2025 ITA/PERF Deadline Reminder

If you wish to apply for State Fiscal Year 2025 funding, submit an Intent to Apply (ITA) with Priority Evaluation and Ranking Formula (PERF) information and supporting documentation through the Online ITA/PERF System by **Tuesday, October 31, 2023**.

Reminder: October 20, 2023, is the final submittal date for Online Submittal Authorization Certificates and requesting a WAMS User ID and DNR Switchboard access.

The ITA/PERF deadline applies to all types of projects funded under the Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) and Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP), including storm water projects and pilot projects.

BIL-funded projects

Municipalities that plan to apply for funding through a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law-funded program must submit a regular SFY 2025 ITA/PERF by the October 31 deadline. BIL-funded projects include:

- Lead Service Line replacements (both public and private) and related LSL inventory work
  - Submit a separate ITA/PERF for LSL-related work in order to be eligible for the 0.25% flat interest rate and LSL PF available only for LSL projects.
- Emerging Contaminants projects (PFAS-related drinking water and wastewater projects)

More eligibility and funding details for the EC Programs and LSL Program are available in the SFY 2024 CWFP and SDWLP Intended Use Plans. Note that the additional SDWLP EC PERF (Form 8700-399) and SDWLP LSL PERF (Form 8700-383) will need to be submitted with the financial assistance application, not with the ITA/PERF submittal.

Documentation

Be certain to upload relevant documentation for PERF questions that are applicable to your project. Refer to the "ITA Help Text" for information on acceptable documentation. If relevant documentation is not uploaded, then *zero points* will be granted for that question.

- Direct CWFP PERF questions to the DNR Construction Management Engineer in your region
- Direct SDWLP PERF questions to Jim Witthuhn

Changes to CWFP PERF score reevaluation process

The revised Chapter NR 162, Wis. Adm. Code, is expected to go into effect in the near future. There are two changes to the rule related to the CWFP PERF score reevaluation process:

- There will no longer be a 30-day PERF rescore period after the Project Priority List is published. There will still be a 30-day PERF score reevaluation period after application submittal.
- Only new information that did not exist at the time of the original ITA/PERF submittal will be considered as part of a PERF reevaluation request.

Given these changes, it is important to upload the relevant documentation with the original ITA/PERF submittal.

Guidance

For assistance navigating the Online ITA/PERF System, and what information and supporting documentation are required for each question, review the appropriate "ITA Help Text for the Online System" publication. You may wish to save or print these guidance documents to view during the process:

- CWFP ITA Help Text (PUB-CF-062)
- SDWLP ITA Help Text (PUB-CF-063)

Resources

For additional ITA/PERF submittal information, read the following articles in E-Bulletin Volume 12, Issue 06:

- "Online System Access & Authorization Reminders" on bottom of page 2.
- "SFY 2025 ITAs and PERFs" on page 3.

Contact information

- Direct Online System questions to Suzy Hasheider
- Direct CWFP ITA questions to Lisa Bushby
- Direct SDWLP ITA questions to Noah Balgooyen

Online System Access & Authorization Reminders

October 20, 2023, is the final date for submitting Online Submittal Authorization Certificates, creating WAMS User IDs, and requesting access to the Online ITA/PERF System via the DNR Switchboard.

Find instructions on our Online Systems page

Four New Loan Project Managers

We are pleased to announce four new project managers in the Environmental Loans Section. Please give a warm welcome to Ashley Jimenez, Bryan Patek, Corey Pope, and Brian Boelkow!

They are learning about the programs and general loan project management as well as how to process disbursement requests. All four will be working out of the Community Financial Assistance (CFA) Bureau space in the DNR's Central Office.

Ashley and Bryan P. started their positions on July 31 while Corey and Brian B. started on August 14. Here's a little something from the new loan project managers to help you get to know them better:

Ashley Jimenez

"I am extremely excited to be a part of the Wisconsin DNR team! I am originally a Wisconsin native but moved to Los Angeles for my undergraduate and graduate studies. Fight on! After my studies, I entered the nonprofit sector, specifically dealing with permanent supportive housing. I was passionate about advocating for my participants, but after several years of being away from my home I decided it was time to move back. It has been the best decision I have ever made! I enjoy spending most of my free time with my three furry babies and my family. I am all for self-care so at the end of my day I like to journal and read. I am a major foodie so if anyone has any recommendations in Madison, please reach out! I look forward to working with this team!" Contact Ashley at 608-212-7690 and Ashley.Jimenez@Wisconsin.gov.

Bryan Patek

"Hello everyone! I'm excited to begin this new role with the Environmental Loans team! Just to share a little bit about myself, I joined DNR as a summer intern in the Waste & Materials Management program. After I graduated from UW-Madison in 2019, I joined the Division of Forestry, where I managed restoration projects on the Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest under the Good Neighbor Authority. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with friends, checking out new places to eat or grab a drink, and watching Wisconsin sports. I couldn't be happier to join this team and I look forward to working with you all!" Contact Bryan at 608-212-8298 and Bryan.Patek@Wisconsin.gov.

Corey Pope

"I've spent the majority of my career in banking and finance operations, including several years with WHEDA working in single family housing. I grew up and currently live in New Glarus with my wife, two sons, two dogs, two cats, and one lizard I'd love to rehome. The family photo is from our vacation this year to Lake Louise in Canada, pictures do not do this place justice!" Contact Corey at 608-212-8928 and Corey.Pope@Wisconsin.gov.

Brian Boelkow

"I am originally from southeastern Wisconsin but went to college at Arizona State University. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Earth and Environmental Studies and a minor in sustainability. As an environmental consultant I spent most of my time conducting Phase I Environmental Site Assessments and managing stormwater pollution prevention projects. My hobbies include many outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and snowboarding. I am extremely excited to be a part of the DNR and am looking forward to being a positive force by helping to maintain our great state's water resources." Contact Brian at 608-212-8234 & Brian.Boelkow@Wisconsin.gov.