



Water Resource Funding in Florida February 2014

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection 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. The Clean Water SRF is Florida's largest financial assistance program for water infrastructure. More information is available at www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wff/cwsrf or contact Tim Banks at 850.245.8360 or 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. Interest rates on loans are typically 40% below market rates. More information is available at www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wff/dwsrf or contact Paul Brandl at 850.245.8373 or paul.brandl@dep.state.fl.us.
- **Small Community Wastewater Facilities Grants Program** provides grants to fund 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. A local match is required. The program is linked to the Clean Water SRF program outlined above, and is highly competitive. More information is available at www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wff/cwsrf/smalcwgp.htm or contact Tim Banks at 850.245.8358 or timothy.banks@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 www.dep.state.fl.us/water/nonpoint/319h.htm or contact Kate Brackett at 850.245.8682 or kathryn.brackett@dep.state.fl.us.
- Funding for projects related to the implementation of **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)** determinations may be available through periodic legislative appropriations to the DEP. When funds are available, the program prioritizes stormwater retrofit projects to benefit impaired waters, somewhat along the lines of the previously mentioned Section 319 grant program. Information is available at www.dep.state.fl.us/water/watersheds/tmdl_grant.htm or by contacting Kate Brackett

- at 850.245.8682 or kathryn.brackett@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.

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 **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 or contact Roger Doherty at 850.717-8417 or roger.doherty@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/ and look for the links to “Funding” and “Long Term Financing” or contact Gary Williams at 850.668.2746 or 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/; 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 www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/watman 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/investmentPriorities.htm or contact Jonathan Corso at 404.730.3023 or jonathan.corso@eda.gov.

U.S. Department of Agriculture **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.rurdev.usda.gov/UWEP_HomePage.html or contact Michael Langston at 352.338.3485 or michael.langston@fl.usda.gov.

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; see <http://thomas.loc.gov/links/>.

You may also want to review:

- **Grants.gov** at <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 <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 <http://www.floridaresourcedirectory.org/>, 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 contacts should be to **Florida’s Division of Emergency Management** at <http://www.floridadisaster.org/> or your county emergency management agency (see www.floridadisaster.org/fl_county_em.asp); and the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** at 1.800.621.FEMA (3362), or visit www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm, 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 Tom Shiflett with the Department of Environmental Protection at 850.245.8339 or tom.shiflett@dep.state.fl.us.