

## Focus on: Clean water grants and loans



*Diamond Fork Creek, a tributary to the Klickitat River.*

### More information

Water Quality Grants and Loans  
<https://go.usa.gov/xE4XS>

2015-17 Outcomes Report:  
<https://go.usa.gov/xE4XI>

Ecology Grants and Loans Map  
<https://go.usa.gov/xE4Pv>

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### Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-6600 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>.

People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

## Funding Water Quality Improvement and Protection

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) administers funding for projects to improve and protect water quality throughout the state. The program combines grants and loans from state and federal funding sources with technical assistance to program applicants.

Ecology manages water quality grant and loan applications under one combined funding cycle, one application, one competitive rating process, and one funding offer list. The funding program is open from August to October, with a draft ranking to the Legislature issued during budget development. Once a state budget is passed, agreements are made and are active for one to five years.

## Funding Sources and Annual Funding Levels

Ecology administers four primary funding sources. On average, we fund 110 projects per year. Annual funding levels are based on six-year averages:

- **\$1.6 million/year:** Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Program (Section 319).
- **\$18 million/year:** State Centennial Clean Water Program (Centennial).
- **\$112 million/year:** Combined State & Federal Washington State Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund Program (Revolving Fund).
- **\$33 million/year:** The Stormwater Financial Assistance Program (SFAP).

Periodically, Congress or the State Legislature provides additional sources of funding. The integrated nature of our program means we can efficiently add additional funding sources into the annual process.



Figure 1 Membrane bioreactor treatment facilities significantly reduce nutrients in wastewater and produce a much cleaner effluent safe for discharge. Photo Credit: Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.



Figure 2 Farms across the state are implementing direct seed farming, which can reduce soil erosion into surface waters by 90%, while also reducing fertilizer use and the release of carbon.



Figure 3 Manchester Stormwater Park is an innovative project that combines stormwater treatment with a community park, improving water quality and safety for vehicle, bike, and pedestrian traffic. Photo Credit: Kitsap County.

## Eligible Funding Recipients

To be eligible, a recipient must be a public body in Washington, such as a county, city, conservation district, federally recognized tribe, institution of higher education, or special purpose district. Non-profit organizations can receive Section 319 funding.

## Types of Funding Assistance

Funding opportunities vary by funding source, category, and project type. With a single application process and funding list, Ecology creates funding packages that meet the financial needs of project applicants:

- Grants (Centennial, Section 319, SFAP)
- Loans (Revolving Fund, interest rate based on 20 year municipal bond rate)
- Forgivable principal loans (Revolving Fund)
- Hardship funding for financially distressed communities

## Eligible Project Categories

We fund projects in four main categories. In addition, the Green Project Reserve designation can be applied to a project or a component of a project in any category.

Project categories:

- Wastewater facilities and planning
- Stormwater facilities, retrofits, education, and planning
- Nonpoint source restoration, acquisition, and water quality improvement plans
- On-site sewage system repairs, sewer connections, and surveys
- Green Project Reserves, which focus on green infrastructure, water or energy efficiencies, and environmentally innovative activities. Components of these projects are eligible for forgivable principal loans.

## Funding Priorities and Ranking Process

We leverage available funds to meet water quality priorities across the state, investing in projects that achieve the greatest water quality and public health benefits.

Ecology documented more than \$4 billion in statewide water quality infrastructure needs in the 2012 Clean Watershed Needs Survey EPA prepared for Congress. While pressure on local economies and ratepayers have increased, state and federal program funding continues to decline, often leading to deferred maintenance and repairs to our clean water infrastructure. .

In an effort to maximize all available funds, Ecology develops a statewide priority list of proposed water quality projects by evaluating project proposals based on a set of rating criteria, which can be found at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1710019.html>.