

# Water Quality Grants & Loans

## Focus on Water Quality Combined Fund

The Water Quality Combined Fund is an integrated funding program to improve and protect water quality throughout the state. Every year, applicants can access grants and loans through a single application process. We use a competitive ranking process to award funding and provide technical assistance to applicants.

### Who can apply?

Public organizations and Federally recognized Tribes in Washington are eligible for funding. These include:

- Counties, cities, and towns
- Conservation districts
- Political subdivisions
- Special purpose districts
- Washington State institutions of higher education
- Not-for-profit organizations (Section 319 funding only)

### Eligible project types

- Wastewater facilities
- Stormwater activities and facilities
- Nonpoint source activities
- On-site sewage systems

### Application Cycle

- **March-July:** Project planning & coordination with Ecology
- **July-September:** Application workshops & submittal
- **October-December:** Application review
- **January-February:** Draft funding offer & public comment
- **June:** Final funding offer
- **July-January:** Agreement development
- **Next 1-5 years:** Agreement execution & closeout

### How to apply?

Applying for any Ecology grant or loan starts with registering for Ecology's Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system. New users must have a Secure Access Washington account and request EAGL as a service. Please visit [Ecology's Combined Fund webpage](#) for more information.

### Ranking process

- Ecology staff verifies the eligibility of each application
- Two Ecology staff independently rate each eligible proposal
- We average the two scores to obtain the final score
- If the two scores deviate by more than 100 points, we bring in a third independent evaluator and average the two closest scores.
- A proposal must have an overall score of at least 600 points to be considered for funding

We develop a statewide priority list of proposed water quality projects by reviewing the project proposals based on a set of rating criteria. All criteria can be found in the application guidelines.

### Environmental Justice Assessments

Grant and loan offers more than \$12 million receive Environmental Justice Assessments to help fairly distribute environmental benefits and address inequalities. An environmental justice assessment includes consultation with Tribes and outreach to people at high risk for poor health due to environmental conditions and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

### Our funding priorities

- Achieve the greatest water quality and public health benefit
- Aid small, financially distressed communities with grants and low-interest loans for water pollution control infrastructure projects

## Types of assistance available

Funding opportunities vary by funding source, funding category, and project type. We create funding packages that meet the needs of applicants that could have a combination of the types of assistance listed below.

### Grants

Grants can fund hardship wastewater facilities, nonpoint source activities, stormwater activities, stormwater facilities, and on-site sewage system projects. The local match required for grants varies by project type:

- Nonpoint- no match required
- Stormwater- 0%-15%
- On-site sewage- see funding guidelines

### Loans

We provide low interest loans through the State Revolving Fund. Lower interest rates are available for hardship eligible projects and nonpoint projects. No matching funds are required.

### Forgivable Principal Loans

Forgivable principal loans are loans that the borrower does not repay. These are for financially distressed communities and projects that meet the criteria for Green Project Reserve. Green Project Reserve can be applied to a project that fits into one of four categories: green infrastructure, water or energy efficiency, or environmentally innovative activities.

### Hardship Funding

Special consideration for applicants who meet financial hardship criteria for wastewater and stormwater facility projects. May include a combination of grants, reduced match requirements, forgivable principal loans, and loans with as low as 0% interest rates.

## Where does the money come from?

### Clean Water Act Section 319 (Grant)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides grants to the state under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act.

### Centennial Clean Water Program (Grant)

State funding to provide support for wastewater facility projects for financially distressed communities, stormwater activities, OSS, and nonpoint source pollution projects.

### Clean Water State Revolving Fund (Loan)

Funded through an annual EPA capitalization grant, state matching funds, and principal and interest repayments on past program loans under the federal Clean Water Act.

### Stormwater Financial Assistance Program (Grant)

State funding to reduce water pollution impacts from existing infrastructure and development.

### Stormwater Community-Based Public-Private Partnerships (CBP3 Grant)

State funding for planning and development of CBP3s, performance-based contracts, and other forms of alternative procurement to accelerate stormwater project delivery.

### Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants (Grant)

EPA awards grant funding to states to address infrastructure needs for combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows, and stormwater management with an emphasis on green infrastructure, water and energy efficiency improvements, and other environmentally innovative activities.



Karen Izumoto  
Karen.Izumoto@ecy.wa.gov  
360.628.1976



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6600 or email at [elaine.markham@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:elaine.markham@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.