Emerging Contaminants in Small and Disadvantaged Communities Grant Guidelines

331-765 • 11/12/2024

Our Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) is offering financial help through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Emerging Contaminants in Small and Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) grant to public water systems (PWS) that serve small or disadvantaged communities. The EC-SDC grant can provide both funding and free technical support to eligible water systems. This includes help with water sampling, short-term solutions, and improvements to water infrastructure.

The EC-SDC grant focuses on projects that intend to tackle issues with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water, whether found in the PWS or in source water. We will give priority for funding and support to PWSs that serve small or disadvantaged communities and are dealing with PFAS contamination, manganese, or cyanotoxins in their drinking water.

This guide explains the definitions and criteria used by us to determine which applicants and projects are eligible for EC-SDC funding and technical assistance. We will make the final decision on eligibility after the applicant submits all required documents.

Program Eligibility

The following sections detail eligibility requirements for EC-SDC funding and technical assistance consideration.

Eligible Contaminants

- PFAS exceeding a Washington state action level (SAL) or EPA maximum contamination level (MCL).
- Manganese contamination exceeding the secondary MCL or health advisory level.*
- Treatment to reduce cyanotoxins due to documented harmful algae blooms.*

**PWS with elevated manganese and documented cyanotoxin may be eligible for EC-SDC funding on a case-by-case basis determined by DWSRF staff depending on funding and capacity.*

Table 1. Eligible Contaminants and Associated MCL and SAL/HAL

Eligible Compound	Primary MCL	SAL or HAL
PFOA	4.0 ppt	10 ppt
PFOS	4.0 ppt	15 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt	65 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt	9 ppt
HFPO-DA	10 ppt	10 ppt
PFBS	*See Hazard Index Below*	354 ppt
Hazard Index	1* (unitless ratio)	N/A
Manganese	0.05 mg/L (secondary)	0.3 mg/L
Cylindrospermopsin	N/A	0.7 µg/L
Microcystins	N/A	0.3 µg/L
Anatoxin-a	N/A	0.3 µg/L**

Eligible contaminants and associated MCL and SAL/HAL. PFAS contaminants in parts per trillion (ppt). Manganese in milligrams per liter (mg/L). Cyanotoxin contaminants in micrograms per liter (µg/L).

**The "Hazard Index" is an EPA approach to calculating health risks when we're exposed to multiple chemicals at the same time. Each chemical amount is compared to its safety level and added with other PFAS chemicals compared to their safety level, to make sure the total levels are low enough to protect health. EPA explains the PFAS MCL including the hazard index provision in the EPA fact sheet at Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) | US EPA.*

***The available data on toxicity are not adequate to derive a health-based value for anatoxin-a at the present time. EPA will reevaluate the ability to derive an HAL for anatoxin-a as new information becomes available. We use 0.3 µg/L as an action trigger in the interim.*

Eligible Communities

- **Small Communities.** PWSs serving 10,000 people or less (maximum total population) that do not have the capacity to incur debt sufficiently to finance a project or activity under the grant program. Small water systems unable to finance projects required to address emerging contaminants have one or more of the following characteristics.
  - Less than 500 maximum total population, or
  - Do not have an approved planning document, such as Water System Plan or Small Water System Management Program
- **Disadvantaged Communities (DAC).** WAC 246-296-020, PWS meets DAC criteria outlined in the *DWSRF Construction Loan Guidelines*, Appendix B 331-196 (PDF).
  - Our Disadvantaged Community Map shows census tracts that are considered DAC by meeting one or more Washington Tracking Network (WTN) Criteria (*DWSRF Disadvantaged Community Guidance* 331-753 [PDF]). Use this map strictly as a guide for potential DAC qualification. Keep in mind that census tracts do not perfectly align with PWS service areas. It is common for a service area to serve multiple census tracts. Not all service areas are mapped. PWSs owned and operated by federally recognized tribes are not mapped, as this data is not available.

Eligible Water Systems

- Group A water systems (WAC 246-290-020 (5)):
  - Community water systems as defined by WAC 246-290-020 (5a) not owned by state or federal entities.
  - Non-transient non-community water systems (NTNC) as defined by WAC 246-290-020 (5bi) not owned by state, federal or for-profit entities.
  - Transient non-community water systems (TNC) as defined by WAC 246-290-020 (5bii) not owned by state, federal, or for profit entities, **if in an area of known contamination** (see the "Sampling" section).

Prioritization

We prioritize EC-SDC funding and technical assistance for eligible PWS projects that consider regional solutions, climate resiliency, and long-term compliance and success. We will determine prioritization and award decisions quarterly using several criteria including water system size, contamination level, and contaminant health risk. We prioritize PWS with the highest contamination levels.

The sections below detail measures we use to determine project priority.

Priority Groups

1. Disadvantaged communities over small-not-disadvantaged communities.
2. Community water systems over NTNC; and NTNC over TNC.
3. Not-for-profit community systems over for-profit community systems.

Priority Emerging Contaminants

1. PFAS compound SAL exceedances.
2. PFAS compound MCL exceedances.
3. Cyanotoxin or manganese HAL exceedances.
4. Cyanotoxin or manganese MCL exceedances.

Priority Projects

We will use an alternatives analysis,* including a rate impact assessment, to determine the best project with prioritization as follows.

1. Consolidation.
2. New Source Development.
3. Treatment.

**A recent (within five years) consolidation feasibility study may qualify as an acceptable alternatives analysis.*

Sampling

Group A Community and NTNC water systems are required to monitor for PFAS beginning January 2023 through December 2025. The federal PFAS rule also requires PWSs to complete and submit initial monitoring for PFAS by April 26, 2027. We provide a free PFAS sampling program for Community and NTNC water systems. Results count toward both state and federally required monitoring. Water systems can sign up using the following link: Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water PFAS Free Sampling Enrollment Form. Systems with detections must collect follow-up samples and comply with rule requirements.

If a TNC water system falls within an area of concern (see below criteria), EC-SDC may provide sampling at no cost.

- Within one mile of a fire station or fire training facility.
- Within one mile of a landfill.
- Within one mile of a wastewater treatment plant outfall or large on-site sewage system drain field.
- Within one mile of a public water system (PWS) source with a known PFAS detection.
- Within two miles of a United States Department of Defense site.
- Within two miles of an airport.

If you think a TNC falls within the above criteria or needs help determining eligibility for EC-SDC, please contact Samantha.Delmer@doh.wa.gov.

Short-Term Mitigation

The EC-SDC grant may provide pitcher filters and annual replacement filters as short-term mitigation for affected households served by eligible water systems working toward long-term solutions for PFAS contamination. Eligible water systems must work toward a long-term solution to be eligible for short-term mitigation. We make final determination for short-term mitigation needs.

We will prioritize water systems seeking short-term mitigation intervention based on the below criteria.

- Greater than 70 ppt PFOA or PFOS (HAL) to households served by public water systems meeting the eligibility requirements of the EC-SDC grant.
- Less than HAL but >SAL; in prioritization order.
    1. Communities meeting Disadvantaged Communities definition.
    2. Communities meeting small definition in EC-SDC workplan.
    3. Highest PFAS levels first.
- Greater than MCLs.

Additionally, we will prioritize water systems providing short-term mitigation that give precedence to:

- Pregnant women and formula fed infants.
- Households with children under five years old.

The EC-SDC program administrator will work individually with eligible water systems to determine the best solution for purchasing and distributing pitchers and filters.

Long-Term Remediation

Long-term remediation focuses on infrastructure improvements. This section outlines funding requirements and aid for water systems pursuing EC-SDC funding.

Technical Assistance

EC-SDC can provide free technical assistance to eligible water systems working toward long-term remediation. We hold contracts with several engineering firms to help with alternatives analysis, treatment design, new source development, planning documents, and funding eligibility. Water systems requiring assistance should request technical assistance here. We will review requests and prioritize them using EC-SDC metrics; we will coordinate with ODW staff. We make assignments based on public health risk and communities impacted by contamination.

To discuss your project or if you have questions about technical assistance opportunities, contact watersystemhelp@doh.wa.gov.

Planning and Engineering Grants

We have additional funds available to subsidize planning and engineering project needs. Planning and engineering loans and grants are available on a first-come basis to drinking water systems to pay for planning documents and engineering design. Applications are accepted year-round.

DWSRF program provides funding for:

- Planning and Engineering.
- Consolidation, Restructuring, and Regionalization feasibility.
- New source development.
- Water source treatment.

We use the Washington Loan Tracking (WALT) application. Please see How to Apply for DWSRF Funding for project reviews and determinations. Through WALT, you can submit your funding applications, check the status of your application, and upload any required documents.

We will connect water systems with other DWSRF funding opportunities as needed. For additional information about planning and engineering grants, please email dwsrf@doh.wa.gov.

Office of Drinking Water Contacts

Drinking Water State Revolving Funding Program

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Questions About	Contact	Phone	E-mail
General Program and Funding	Chris Pettit	564-233-1408	Chris.Pettit@doh.wa.gov
Emerging Contaminants for Small and Disadvantaged Communities	Sam Delmer	360-688-0610	Samantha.Delmer@doh.wa.gov
Project Eligibility, Scope of Work, Funding	Jocelyne Gray	564-669-4893	Jocelyne.Gray@doh.wa.gov
Cultural/Environmental	Scott Kugel	360-480-7617	Scott.Kugel@doh.wa.gov
Technical Assistance	TBD	TBD	WaterSystemHelp@doh.wa.gov
WALT Access and Application Assistance	Jason Cammarano		dwsrf@doh.wa.gov

For More Information

Contact our nearest regional office from 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. If you have an after-hours emergency, call 877-481-4901.

If you have questions on regulatory requirements, project reports, construction documents, or planning requirements, please contact your regional office.

Eastern Regional Office 509-329-2100

Northwest Regional Office 253-395-6750

Southwest Regional Office 360-236-3030

Washington State Department of HEALTH