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## State Water Resources Control Board

# County-wide and Regional Funding Program Application and Funding Process Overview

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has evaluated current funding programs and identified a need for regional programs that address drought-related and contamination issues for state small water systems (state smalls) and domestic wells serving disadvantaged communities (DACs) and low-income households. These needs are the primary focus for this funding, but proposals may also include work to address specific needs of public water systems. The State Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance (DFA) is opening this solicitation for County-wide and Regional Funding Programs. The purpose of this document is to provide information on the funding available, how to apply, and the grant agreement process. This document is intended to be reviewed prior to preparing an application.

### Funding Overview

The State Water Board has funding available from various sources within the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Program to fund drinking water projects that address drought-related and contamination issues. Although we have several programs already in place, we have identified gaps for regional programs that address the needs of households served by state smalls and domestic wells, particularly in the areas outside of the San Joaquin Valley which is already served by an existing eight county program implemented by Self-Help Enterprises.

DFA does not award funding directly to households, and available DFA funding to address emergency needs of state smalls and domestic wells can't be implemented on an immediate basis. One key goal of this program is to award funding to counties or their partners to enable them to setup programs proactively, based on anticipated needs, and therefore be ready to respond promptly when urgent needs arise.

Proposed eligible recipients and project types include:

#### *Grant Recipients*

- Counties
- Non-governmental organization on behalf of one or more counties
- Other public agencies on behalf of one or more counties

### *Recipients provide assistance to*

- State smalls serving a DAC. State smalls are defined by having less than 15 service connections or 25 yearlong residents.
- Domestic wells serving a DAC
- Small DAC public water systems, which may include schools \*

\* DFA. Drought and contamination issues for public water systems, including emergency needs, can generally be addressed through other SAFER funding programs with funding provided directly to the public water system. Scope to address public water system needs as part of a County-wide or Regional Program may be redirected accordingly. Public water systems should only be included in these proposals if the public water system(s) need county support to address urgent drought response needs. Consult DFA staff to determine if work to support public water system needs is appropriate as part of your County-wide or Regional Program.

### *Project Types*

- Assessment
  - Community outreach
  - Domestic well testing
- Interim Solutions
  - Bottled water
  - Tanks and hauled water
  - Kiosk filling stations
  - Point of Use/Point of Entry (POU/POE) installation and maintenance
- Long-Term Solutions
  - Well repairs and/or replacements
  - Limited-scale consolidation (such as laterals, above-ground interties)
  - POU/POE installation and maintenance, in some cases

### **Funding Limitations**

Based on priorities established by the State Water Board annually adopted [Fund Expenditure Plan](#) for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, SAFER funding is prioritized for small DACs and/or low-income households.

A community is determined to be disadvantaged if the annual median household income (MHI) for the community is less than eighty percent (80%) of the statewide annual MHI level. To determine if your community meets this requirement, you can visit: [Drinking Water System Outreach Tool \(ca.gov\)](#) or [Explore Census Data](#). If you need further assistance in determining if your community is disadvantaged, please contact us at [DFA-CAA@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:DFA-CAA@waterboards.ca.gov).

A household is determined to be a disadvantaged household using the following eligibility measures: household within a community in which the MHI is less than eighty

percent (80%) of the statewide annual MHI level; household with an income that is less than two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level or less than eighty percent (80%) of the statewide MHI level; or participation in another low-income program that is shown to meet the eligibility measures provided, e.g., California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) and other methodologies as approved by the State Water Board. These income qualifications may be waived during large-scale emergencies such as earthquake, flood, drought, fire, or pandemic. An example Self Certification of Household Income and Occupancy template can be provided upon request.

The State Water Board can provide funding for well sampling that includes analyses for contaminants with primary maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) and secondary MCLs, and for emerging contaminants. Generally, funding for solutions (such as bottled water, tanks and hauled water, POU, etc.) must be related to a primary MCL exceedance or drought-related issue, but other situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The proposed period for completing work under the agreement generally should not exceed three years, but unique circumstances that specifically require a longer timeframe for implementation may be considered.

## **Overall Process**

The State Water Board provides funding for projects; however, we do not implement the projects or programs. If funding is awarded, the grant recipient (county or eligible partner entity) would be responsible for managing and implementing the program. Additionally, our funding is through a reimbursement process, so the recipient would need to incur costs before they can be reimbursed by the State Water Board.

If the county is interested in developing a program (either directly, or through an eligible partner entity), the overall process is as follows:

1. County or eligible partner entity apply through Financial Assistance Application Tool (FAAST).
2. State Water Board staff review the application. State Water Board staff work with the applicant to obtain any additional information to complete the application package and make a funding recommendation.
3. Approval of funding by the State Water Board DFA Deputy Director. Recipient may start implementing project and costs may start being incurred upon approval; however, costs cannot be reimbursed until after execution of funding agreement.
4. Drafting and execution of a funding agreement.
5. Recipient submission of reimbursement requests and progress reports in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement.
6. State Water Board payment of reimbursement requests.

Additional detail on each step is provided in the following sections.

## **Application Submission Process**

The first step is preparing and submitting a [FAAST](#) application. The application and attachments can be accessed at: [Drought and Water Quality Funding for Counties | California State Water Resources Control Board](#). Completed attachments are not required for initial submission; however, they need to be completed before the State Water Board can approve funding. Applicants are encouraged to complete Attachments 1 and 2 to the best of their ability during initial submission and State Water Board staff can assist in refining after submission. Applicants are also encouraged to submit any additional attachments or supporting documentation that may supplement their application.

### **Detailed Application Instructions by Project Type**

#### ***Community Outreach***

If the proposed project includes community outreach, applicants should consider the following:

- Outreach materials should be provided in English and Spanish if the estimated Spanish speaking population exceeds 5%.
- Outreach materials should be distributed by mail, door-to-door, public outreach meetings, or through the use of pre-existing communication channels such as newsletters, email lists, websites, and coordination with other financial assistance programs.

#### ***Domestic Well Testing***

If the proposed program includes provisions for domestic well testing, applicants should provide the following:

- List of contaminants for sampling
- Historical water quality data, if available.

#### ***Provision of Bottled Water***

If the proposed project is a bottled water project, applicants should consider the following:

For bottled water the maximum allocation is as follows:

- Sixty (60) gallons per household per month

Bottled water should be provided in five-gallon containers. Six packs of one-gallon containers may be provided for residents that cannot lift five-gallon containers due to age or health conditions. The cost estimate may also include delivery costs, twelve (12) five-gallon bottle deposits per household, and a one-time hand pump for the five-gallon containers. It may not include dispensers or cups for households.

### ***Provision of Hauled Water***

If the proposed project is a hauled water project, applicants should consider the following:

For hauled water, the maximum allocation is as follows:

- Fifty (50) gallons per person per day

The cost estimate may also include hauling costs, purchase, delivery and installation of temporary water storage tanks, and booster pumps and electrical. Hauled water must come from a permitted source and must be hauled by a certified water hauler. A list of certified water haulers can be found on California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) webpage. Please note that hauled water programs should typically contain a bottled water component for drinking and cooking as water stored in hauled water tanks may not be appropriate for this purpose.

### ***Kiosk Filling Stations***

If the proposed project is for vending machine or kiosk filling station assistance, applicants should consider the following:

- The kiosk must serve a DAC. MHI information for the community must be below eighty percent (80%) of the statewide annual MHI level.
- Permitting must be discussed with CDPH.

### ***POU / POE Treatment Solutions***

If the proposed program includes provisions for POU and POE treatment, applicants should provide the following:

- A cost comparison of the proposed POU/POE treatment system and other assistance alternatives (for short-term or long-term, depending on your project needs)
- General information on whether the planned POU/POE technology addresses the contaminants of concern in the area

Please note that POU/POE programs should contain a bottled water component in the interim period between initial sampling and POU installation.

### ***Domestic Well Replacements***

If the proposed program includes provisions for domestic well replacement, general eligible costs include:

- Water quality sampling and laboratory analysis
- Design
- Permits and connection fees

- New well construction, well replacement, well rehabilitation/repair, well abandonment
- Distribution/conveyance pipelines (up to the point of entry of household)
- All necessary appurtenances, etc.

### ***Limited-scale Consolidations***

If the proposed project is for consolidation assistance, applicants should consider the following:

- Only limited-scale consolidation will be considered (such as laterals, above ground interties). Full scale consolidation/regionalization should generally be pursued through the [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#), with technical assistance available through DFA.

### **Application Review and Approval Process**

Upon submission of a complete FAAST application, State Water Board staff will review the application and any attachments. If needed, State Water Board staff will reach out to the applicant to help refine the attachments or obtain any additional information necessary for making a funding decision. The following factors will be considered in determining funding recommendations:

- (1) the severity or likely severity and duration of existing or potential needs and improved outcomes upon implementation of the proposed project
- (2) cost effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed solution
- (3) complimentary actions being taken or planned in order to implement long-term solutions, if applicable

Once all necessary information is gathered, State Water Board staff will submit a funding recommendation to the State Water Board DFA Deputy Director for approval. Once a funding decision is made by the Deputy Director, State Water Board staff will notify the applicant. If funding is approved, the recipient may start implementing the program and costs may start being incurred upon approval. However, a grant agreement must be executed before reimbursements can be issued. Note that any work done prior to grant agreement execution is conducted at the recipient's own risk.

Applications are not scored competitively and will be accepted continuously, though will be subject to fund availability. DFA staff are available to assist prospective applicants and answer questions as they develop their application/proposal.

### **Grant Agreement and Reimbursement Process**

Once funding is approved by the State Water Board DFA Deputy Director, the next steps are developing a grant agreement and issuing reimbursement. The steps for this process are outlined below. Lack of responsiveness after project approval and prior to funding agreement execution may result in withdrawal of the grant award. In addition,

lack of responsiveness after funding agreement execution may result in termination of the funding agreement.

1. State Water Board staff will send out a welcome package outlining all documents that will be needed prior to grant execution. An example of these documents is outlined in Attachment 3 of the FFAST application. Please note a submission for Attachment 3 is not required during the application phase.
2. State Water Board staff will collaborate with the grant recipient to draft a scope of work for the funding agreement. Attachment 1 from the FFAST application will be used as a starting point.
3. Once a draft scope of work is agreed upon, a draft of the entire grant agreement, including all standard terms and conditions, will be sent out to the grant recipient for review. An example grant agreement is available upon request for interested applicants to review.
4. After the draft grant agreement is approved by the recipient, it will be routed through State Water Board management for review and approval.
5. Once the grant agreement is approved by State Water Board management, it will be issued to the grant recipient for signature.
6. After the agreement is signed by the grant recipient, the State Water Board Deputy Director will sign. The grant agreement is now considered fully executed.

Upon execution, DFA staff will send out the executed copy of the agreement as well as invoicing and reporting templates. The recipient can submit invoices for reimbursement once the grant agreement is executed. Because reimbursements can only be paid once a funding agreement has been executed, the recipient must be prepared to cover upfront costs.

Invoices and progress reports are typically due on a quarterly basis, within 45 days following the end of a calendar quarter. All invoices must be accompanied by a progress report describing the activities conducted during the quarter. Invoices and progress reports must be completed using template provided by the State. Reimbursements are typically paid out within 45 days of submittal, assuming no disputes are required. Generally, a final project report is also required at the culmination of the project.