



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Springs funding has been available for several years now. What's new and what are the changes?

Since 2012, more than \$191 million has been allocated statewide for springs restoration and protection projects. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the water management districts share a responsibility to identify and implement projects that protect or restore water quality, recharge, and habitat in Florida's extraordinary spring systems. DEP issued new guidance in October 2017 to help ensure consistency in project information and evaluation criteria. The guidance increases transparency for stakeholders and re-emphasizes a public participation process.

Following this guidance, the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD or District) has developed a schedule and funding cycle process with resources to help ensure applicants and stakeholders have full access and opportunity to see springs funding.

2. What types of projects are eligible?

Springs restoration projects that protect and improve the water quality or quantity of waters to and from springs within the 16-county NFWFMD are eligible. Land acquisition projects within spring groundwater contribution areas, Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP), or that are adjacent to/inclusive of a spring are eligible for funding.

Exclusions: Funding is not available for feasibility studies, data collection, or environmental reviews. Please see the *Eligible Projects and Requirements* section of the **Application Guidelines** for more information.

3. What entities may submit projects?

Eligible applicants include local governments, public utilities, registered nonprofit utilities, landowners, agricultural producers, and nonprofits.

4. What is the maximum funding allowable and how much funding is available?

Funding is subject to state appropriation and project approval by both the NFWFMD and DEP. Over the last few years, the District has received approximately \$10 million annually for funding springs projects. There is no individual limit on a project cost or the number of project submittals; however, multi-year projects should be phased to achieve tangible results while also utilizing cost efficiencies. See also #5 below.

5. How are projects with multiple segments or phases addressed?

The District recognizes that large capital improvement investments to improve water quality or quantity may require multiple years of funding to complete. For such projects,

applicants should develop a multi-year funding plan that lists the full costs of the project over the required time period, considering realistic implementation goals. Partial funding may be recommended for one or more segment or phase, upon review by District staff and/or DEP. Applicants should consider leveraging multiple funding sources.

6. I was awarded springs restoration funding in previous years. Am I eligible for FY 2020-2021 funding?

Yes, previous funding does not preclude eligibility for the FY 2020-2021 funding cycle. However, applicants should ensure that any additional projects can be implemented within the same 24-36 month timeframe without impacting the schedule of existing projects. Applicants who submit qualified projects that have not yet received funding may be given priority consideration over existing grantees, excluding multi-phase projects, to ensure support and benefits are distributed as equitably as possible across the District.

7. How many projects am I allowed to submit?

There is no limit to the number of projects that may be submitted and multiple projects per applicant may be funded in a given year. However, each project submitted will be evaluated independently and must meet the same timeframe and other requirements. If the applicant has several springs restoration projects, development of a multi-year capital improvement plan is recommended.

8. Can I resubmit my previously unfunded project?

Applicants may resubmit projects that were not funded previously. The District maintains a potential springs project list that you can check to verify your project is included. If your project is included, and no aspects of the project have changed, no further action is required. If the details of the project have changed at all, please resubmit the project using the ***Application Form***.

9. Do projects need to be “shovel-ready?”

No. Projects may be conceptual, partially developed, or ready for implementation. However, projects should clearly be capable of being completed within 24 months. Depending on the nature and scope of the project, construction projects that are well defined and close to shovel-ready may be ranked higher than others, since such a project would be more likely to be successfully implemented and completed within the given timeframe.

10. Would an “in-progress” project be eligible for consideration of funding?

A project that has already been initiated but not fully funded is eligible for consideration. This is especially true for multi-phased projects. However, financial need should be clearly demonstrated, as springs funding is not intended to replace existing sources of funds.

11. Is match funding required?

Springs funding normally may not exceed fifty percent (50 percent) of the overall project cost. The District Governing Board and DEP may waive this requirement for projects serving rural, financially disadvantaged, or economically distressed communities. Guidelines for claiming status as an “economically distressed community” are provided in the ***Application Guidelines***.

Previous, ongoing, or incurred costs directly related to the project as well as in-kind contributions, legislative funding, or companion projects may qualify to meet additional or matching funding requirements, upon review by District staff. **Note that previous springs funding or match claimed for previous springs funding may not count toward match funding requirements.**

Except for economically distressed or financially disadvantaged communities, projects with contributing funds and/or that leverage multiple funding sources have historically been favorably reviewed and were more likely to receive funding.

12. Is it possible for the District to provide funding up front, rather than on a reimbursement basis?

Funds are provided on a reimbursement basis upon receipt and approval of the required deliverables. Funding on a cost-incurred basis may be considered for projects serving economically distressed communities on a case-by-case basis.

13. My community needs more funding to complete a springs project or a companion water project. Are there other funding sources available?

Yes, several other water project funding sources may be available to applicants meeting certain qualifications and projects meeting eligibility criteria. Below are links and contact information to other loan and grant programs available in northwest Florida.

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection:
<https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/documents/water-resource-funding-florida>
- US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program: www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Technical Assistance Planning Grants: www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/
- Florida Rural Water Association Loan Program: www.frwa.net
- Florida Senate Local Appropriations:
<https://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/Appropriations/Links/LocalFundingInitiativeRequestForm-2020-2021.pdf>
- Florida House of Representatives:
<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Appropriations/projects.aspx>